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## Edwin Sanders Richardson, Educator.

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EDWIN SANDERS RICHARDSON, EDUCATOR.

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EDWIN SANDERS RICHARDSON, EDUCATOR

A Dissertation

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## ABSTRACT

Edwin Sanders Richardson was born on August 31, 1875, the son of James Sanders Richardson and Sallie Catherine Havis. Edwin's father was a Civil War veteran and faced the responsibilities of rearing seven children with a crippling handicap received during that great conflict.

Edwin received about nine years of his early education at the Eureka school in the Langston community of Claiborne Parish, Louisiana. This school was taught by his father, who had prepared himself to teach following the Civil War. Edwin also attended school one summer session under T. H. Harris, who later became State Superintendent of Education. In 1900, Edwin Sanders received his Licentiate of Instruction from George Peabody College for Teachers at Nashville, Tennessee. In 1935, after many years of service in the field of education he was awarded a Bachelor of Science degree from that same college. In 1938, while serving as President of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, he was awarded the Honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Centenary College in Shreveport, Louisiana.

Edwin Sanders' early teaching career had its beginning before he attended college a day in his life. For several years he taught in the one-room schools of Claiborne and Webster Parishes, until he saved enough money to enter Peabody College. In 1900, after receiving his Licentiate of Instruction, he taught as principal of the Atlanta High School in Atlanta, Arkansas, for four years. He personally supervised the building of a new school plant and was tendered a life contract by the Atlanta Board of Trustees.

During 1904 he was employed by the Bienville Parish School Board to teach at the Saline School. Before being elected as Bienville Parish's superintendent in 1908, he also taught at the Liberty Hill School and was teaching principal at the Bienville High School. Edwin Sanders served as Superintendent of Bienville Parish Schools from October, 1908 to July, 1911, when he resigned to work in the Agricultural Extension Department of Louisiana State University.

Edwin Sanders' tenure in agricultural extension work covered the period from 1911 to 1919. His pioneering activities in visual education during this time are considered one of his most outstanding contributions.

From 1921 to 1936, Edwin Sanders Richardson served as Superintendent of Webster Parish Schools. His progressive efforts in school consolidation produced numerous innovations that developed a parish school system which became a model for other parishes and states to follow. During this period as Webster's superintendent, he was an active leader in the Louisiana Teachers Association, serving a term as President. He was also a protagonist for the "County System of Education." Speaking engagements carried him many miles as he spoke in behalf of "equal educational opportunities for all children."

Considerable progress was evident at Louisiana Polytechnic Institute during Richardson's presidency from 1936 to 1941. The administration of the college was streamlined, the physical facilities were expanded, the faculty was increased, and qualifications upgraded, and there was marked growth in student enrollment. In 1941, Richardson was replaced by Dr. Claybrook Cottingham.

During Richardson's closing years of life he served as Executive Secretary to the Webster Council, as Federal Rent Director, and as Field Representative for the State Department of Commerce and Industries. In 1948, after the death of his wife, he returned to Ruston, where he died on October 11, 1950. The remains of Edwin Sanders Richardson were carried to Baton Rouge and interred beside his wife in Roselawn Cemetery.

## CHAPTER I

### ANCESTRY AND EARLY LIFE OF EDWIN SANDERS RICHARDSON

Just as life itself had a beginning, the surname of Edwin Sanders had its beginning somewhere in the archives of time.

Some authorities claim that the name Richardson was derived from the Anglo-Saxon and was originally given to a son of Richard. Richard is taken from the word Richie, meaning powerful and the ard, implying an ensign of office; and means therefore, 'A Mighty Ruler.' The meaning of the name Richardson can then be said to be 'son of a mighty ruler.'<sup>1</sup>

There are those who claim that the most remote ancestors of the family were the dukes of Normandy of the ninth century, at which time there was a long succession of dukes bearing the name of Richard. Many other Normans of the same period used the name Richard about 1066, the date of the Norman Conquest of England.<sup>2</sup>

It is claimed by some that William Belward, Lord of the Monetary of Malpasse, soon after the time of William the Conqueror, had two sons, one of whom was called Richard the Little. The name, John Richardson, was given to the son of Richard the Little, and as far as is known was the first of the family to bear the name in its present form.<sup>3</sup>

The family was largely represented before the sixteenth century in the counties of Norfolk, York, Durham, Gloucester, Nottingham, Warwick,

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<sup>1</sup>Mary Lou Richardson Sibley, The Richardsons and Kindred Families (Shreveport: E. T. Tobey Press, 1962), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Sussex and Surrey. It was to be found in Wales, Scotland and Ireland as well, and to almost every one of the various branches of the family in Great Britain arms were granted.<sup>4</sup>

In the year 1561 the family was represented by Nicholson Richardson in Yorkshire. In 1630 Richard Richardson Esq., of Bradford declined the honor of Knighthood from Charles I. Sir Thomas Richardson of Norfolk was made sergeant-at-law, Chancellor to Queen Elizabeth, Speaker of the House of Commons, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and finally in 1631 Lord Chief Justice of England.<sup>5</sup>

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the Irish branch of the Yorkshire Richardsons settled in Ireland. Of this branch, Simon was granted lands in Monaghan, Cavan and Tyrone, Ireland in 1666 by Charles II.<sup>6</sup>

It is believed that the first Richardson to migrate to the Colonies was Ezekial Richardson, who came in 1630 with Governor Winthrop to Charleston. Ezekial's brothers, Samuel and Thomas, followed in 1636. The parents of these three brothers were Thomas Richardson and his wife, Katherine Bruxford, of West Mills, England, who had married in 1590.<sup>7</sup>

In 1635, Simon, Thomas, John and Luke Richardson came to Virginia. It is believed that these men have been the ancestors of most of the Southern families of the name of Richardson.<sup>8</sup>

The Richardson family in America has been a large and prolific one, and there are numerous members to be found today in practically every state in the Union. The Richardsons were especially noted for strength of character, piety and love of liberty during colonial times. Among

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 4.



those of the name who fought as officers in the Revolutionary War were: Captain Addison of Massachusetts, Major Bradbury of New Hampshire, Captains Caleb and Edward of Massachusetts, Captain Edward of South Carolina, Lieutenant Colonel Holt of Virginia, Captain John of Pennsylvania, Brigadier General Richard of South Carolina, and Colonel William of Maryland.<sup>9</sup>

John Richardson, who was born about 1753, married Mary Stokes of Virginia, and settled in Anson County, North Carolina. John Richardson, the great grandfather of Edwin Sanders Richardson, fought in the Revolutionary War. The census of Anson County, North Carolina shows that John Richardson was living in Anson County in 1790. It is not known when he moved his family to Twiggs County, Georgia, but family records reveal that Mary Stokes Richardson died there in 1848. No records are available showing when or where John Richardson died. Records do reveal that a number of the children were married in Twiggs County, Georgia.<sup>10</sup>

Sanders Richardson, grandfather of Edwin Sanders Richardson, was born the tenth child of John and Mary Stokes Richardson in Anson County, North Carolina. Sanders Richardson, as a young man, moved to Twiggs County, Georgia, where he married Lucinda Outlaw on July 15, 1830. Ten children were born by this union in marriage. James Sanders Richardson, the father of Edwin Sanders Richardson, was born the fifth child on May 10, 1840. In 1848, after the birth of eight children, the decision was made to move to Louisiana.<sup>11</sup>

Three families made the long, hard trip together--the Richardsons and two of the Outlaw sisters and their husbands and children. These

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 20-21.

two sisters had married brothers, Jacob and John Pearce. There were at least fifteen children in the party, traveling by covered wagons with all earthly belongings. The party plodded along slowly, crossing the Mississippi River in small boats, and no doubt seeing many Indians and wild animals along the way.<sup>12</sup>

The Pearce families settled near Dubberly, Louisiana, in Webster Parish. The Sanders Richardson family journeyed on to Mt. Lebanon, where they found a house in which to live and remained there two years. Later, Sanders Richardson and his sons secured land in what is now the Louisiana Ordnance Plant near Minden, Louisiana, and built a double-pen log house with a dog-trot down the center. With the help of his family and a few slaves, Sanders Richardson provided well for his household during the period preceding the Civil War. The old home place burned after the War, but Sanders Richardson rebuilt and remained there until his death in 1903.<sup>13</sup>

James Sanders Richardson, the father of Edwin Sanders Richardson, was only eight years old when he moved to Louisiana. He spent much time and energy as a farm boy with very little opportunity to go to school.<sup>14</sup>

When James Sanders Richardson was a young man, the War Between the States broke out and five brothers went to war. Peter and Jeremiah came home well and perfect. Benjamin and Sidney did not return. James Sanders

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>13</sup>Interview with Mrs. Mary Lou Sibley, sister of Richardson, October 27, 1964.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

Richardson came home a cripple for life, having been wounded in the Battle of Shiloh. He was taken prisoner and carried North. He often said that he attributed his life to the good doctors and the good care given him at Evansville, Indiana. The officers in charge brought a paper for him to sign and told him that if he would sign it they would send him home. He read it and found that it was an oath of allegiance to the Federal Government. He handed it back, saying he did not want his name on a paper like that. They told him that as an alternative he would have to go to prison. He had been in the Evansville hospital for three months; from here they sent him to prison and there he stayed nine months and was finally exchanged near Williamsburg, Virginia.<sup>15</sup>

On his journey home he was sent by boat and boxcar to New Orleans. From New Orleans, James Sanders traveled by boat up the Mississippi River to the Quachita River and then to a place known as Trenton, near Monroe, Louisiana. Upon his arrival at Trenton, he went to an old hotel and sat on the porch the first night wondering what further move to make as his money was exhausted. During his time of contemplation he saw a man from Filmore, Louisiana, whom he knew well enter the hotel office. When the man, who was a doctor, came out of the office, James Sanders approached him and attempted to identify himself. The man would not believe him, for James Richardson had been reported killed at Shiloh. James learned at this time that his family had given him up as dead. The man declared to Mr. Richardson as they talked, "You are an impostor, for I know all the family well and James was killed at Shiloh." The friend struck matches and had a closer look at him, and asked numerous questions. When James Sanders

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

answered the questions correctly, the man became convinced that this was truly James Sanders Richardson.<sup>16</sup>

The doctor loaned James twenty dollars to take care of expenses, and offered to make reservations on the next stage coach to Minden, but the coach was already loaded. The doctor rode on top with the driver and returned home. While in Minden the next morning he told several people of his experience in Monroe.<sup>17</sup>

That afternoon James' father, Sanders Richardson, happened to be in town and heard the news but refused to believe it. He returned home and told the family, saddled a fresh horse and rode in haste to Filmore. It was night when he arrived at the doctor's home. When he aroused the newsbearer, he became convinced of the good news. Sanders Richardson repaid the twenty-dollar loan that his son James had received, and he was often heard to say in later years, "I never was so proud to have twenty dollars in my pocket in all my life."<sup>18</sup>

Sanders Richardson met the daylight stage the next morning, but no son was on it. The following morning he met it, and there he was. What a joy! James Sanders had gone to sleep and lost his cap during the night. His father purchased the only available hat in town, a silk stovepipe beaver, for a man did not go bareheaded in those days.

James Sanders was quite a sight, emaciated, unshaven, hair down on his neck, wearing a dirty, battered uniform and walking poorly on crutches. There was a joyous homecoming for one Confederate soldier in May of 1863.<sup>19</sup>

James Sanders realized that he was truly a soldier returned from the

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

dead when he read a copy of the Obituary published in the Bossier Banner in 1862. The letter read:

James Richardson, a private of the 19th Reg. La. Vols., Company B., fell on the morning of the 6th inst., engaged in the battle of Shiloh, struggling for his country's rights, a martyr to freedom's cause.

This noble youth at the early age of twenty-two, left home and all its endearments, for the privation, toils and hardships of the tented fields. He had won the good wishes and esteem of the whole company, and many there are to mourn his untimely death. Yes, bereaved parents, fond sisters, and beloved brothers, most sympathetically do we join in your lamentations and share with you your great sorrow. But we trust that he has only bid adieu to this scene of carnage and strife to enter into the joys of the world where peace reigns and love is supreme.

His life of sacrifice, thought short of duration speaks in eloquent language of a noble heart and higher purpose--and although he has passed from out midst, his name will ever live in memory registered upon the scroll of the glorious dead. Whose name will shine more bright in the future annals of our country than that of the gallant, heroic soldier who gave his life a sacrifice upon the altar of liberty?

Yes, though a bloody shroud is the slain soldier's fate, the laurels of honor encircle him. What an honorable life! What a glorious death! Echo millions of the brave hearts of our land.

The relentless hand of time will not dare detract one ray from the bright light of glory which lingers around the true hearted soldier's grave. Once more bereaved parents, do we offer you sincere sympathy, and may you, while mourning his loss raise thanks to God for having given you a noble son to die in so honorable a cause.

Farewell brave soldier,

Signed  
A Friend<sup>20</sup>

After the war was over James Sanders went to school at Filmore and prepared himself to teach.

James Sanders Richardson married Sallie Catherine Havis on July 11, 1872 in Claiborne Parish, Louisiana. Sallie had moved to Claiborne Parish from Tallapoosa County, Alabama where she had been born on August 7,

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<sup>20</sup>Sibley, op. cit., p. 62.

1854. She had been a pupil of James Sanders while he was teaching at the Summerfield schools in Claiborne Parish. From this marriage seven children were born: Sidney Havis in August 1873; Edwin Sanders on August 31, 1875; Samuel Milton on January 5, 1878; Mary Lucinda on August 1, 1880; Lida Sue on January 19, 1882; Sarah Cornelia on September 30, 1884, and James Floyd on November 2, 1886.<sup>21</sup>

James Sanders Richardson taught school for twenty years. Edwin Sanders went to school to his father at the Eureka School of the Langston community in Claiborne Parish. They had moved there in 1879 and bought a farm.<sup>22</sup>

I heard my mother tell many times about the day she moved, the 19th day of January, cold and dreary. When they got to the place they had purchased she had a sick headache, two little boys and a crippled husband. How would she ever make beds for them to lie on that night, she didn't know. But the Knightons from whom they had bought the place had left a bed and a good warm fire on the hearth. That saved the day for her. This sealed a long and lasting friendship with the Knighton family.<sup>23</sup>

Possibly the best description of the Richardson family is given in The Memoirs of T. H. Harris.

I mention two families of the Langston community to indicate that there is probably more than one good way to rear children. The Richardsons lived a half mile from the school, and I was frequently in their home. The family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Richardson, three boys, and three girls. Mr. Richardson was the Parish Assessor. He was paralyzed in his legs and could walk only by the use of crutches. He was an excellent man, but the children (and he) looked to 'Ma' to run everything. She did. Mrs. Richardson was large, strong, healthy, full of life, strong in her convictions, had opinions on all subjects and expressed them intelligently. She was ambitious for the children, kind and affectionate, but a strict disciplinarian. Her orders were not idle words; they were issued to be obeyed. When 'Ma' spoke, action, prompt and efficient, followed. Sam said that when 'Ma' predicted rain it was up to the elements to rain. A kind autocrat, a benevolent dictator, was this best of wives and mothers. She

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>22</sup>Interview, Sibley, op. cit.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

saw to it that the children were all educated and fitted for useful service in the world. They all idolized her and insisted upon her domination to the date of her death a year ago.

I visited Mrs. Richardson in Shreveport, where she lived with one of her daughters, two or three years ago. She had fallen and broken a hip, and was in bed with one leg harnessed in a frame to give the broken hip a chance to heal. When I expressed sympathy she said, 'It is nothing for a young woman of eighty who has been raised to withstand hard knocks. Of course, one of you of this soft, effete generation couldn't take it. Mary Lou, why are you standing there? Go make the man some coffee.' And she recovered and discarded her crutches. Pioneer heroines like Mrs. Richardson made America the great country that it is.<sup>24</sup>

During Edwin's early childhood, he was a great tease among the children and always had someone in trouble. It was fun to him and he meant no harm. One time Edwin heard some men telling his father that if a person put his tongue to a frozen wagon-tie it would stick. Edwin didn't exactly believe it so he wanted to see it tried. Since he was more of the careful type and his brother Sam the adventurous kind, he decided to have Sam try it. They went to the buggy house and Sam gave it a try and lost part of his tongue.<sup>25</sup>

Edwin had an inventive mind from his early childhood. When he was just a boy he invented a pea-thresher that thrashed the field peas and blew the husk out and left the peas clean and pretty. An attempt was made to secure a patent on it, but the patent office refused it, saying that a similar machine already existed. He built a rock chimney by the kitchen that fulfilled a need of many years. He also devised a milk cooler that worked on the evaporation principle with the dripping of

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<sup>24</sup>T. H. Harris, The Memoirs of T. H. Harris (Louisiana State University: Bureau of Educational Research, College of Education, 1963), p. 50.

<sup>25</sup>Interview, Sibley, op cit.

water. He built a shower bath outside a bedroom window by placing a barrel on a high scaffold and keeping it full of water for bathing purposes. He was outstanding from his early childhood, studious and always thinking of something to do.<sup>26</sup>

Edwin went to school to his father at Eureka for about nine years. Eureka in later years became the T. H. Harris High School. The school, compared to later schools, was very backward, ungraded and offered a narrow curriculum. The "Webster Blue Back" Speller, McGuffey's Reader and one of the early arithmetics were studied. This just about made the sum total of his early studies. As the educational process continued the children in Edwin's school day usually took the subjects that the teachers liked to teach. If one had various teachers, he would finally get around to most of the subjects if not all of them.

Edwin, along with his brothers and sisters, walked a mile to the Eureka school. One summer he attended the Gilgal school, taught by T. H. Harris, about four miles from home. This being a further distance, the children would ride if the mules weren't plowing. There was always a school in the summer, which was the public school. Usually the neighborhood got together and employed a teacher for a three or four months winter school.<sup>27</sup>

Edwin Sanders did not go through exercises of finishing high school, because there was no such thing in that day. He just "got grown" and wanted to try his own hand at teaching, so he went to Webster and Claiborne Parishes to get a teaching certificate by examination. He and four others of the family began their teaching careers in this manner. The pay

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.



was about thirty dollars a month, which they saved to attend a teacher training school later.<sup>28</sup>

Upon saving a sum of money from teaching at the various one-room schools in Webster and Claiborne Parishes, Edwin entered the old Peabody Normal School of Nashville, Tennessee in 1897 and received his Licentiate of Instruction in 1900.<sup>29</sup>

Edwin was a member of the Baptist Church from boyhood when he joined the Gilgal Baptist Church about 1890. The family went to church in a wagon usually, because the buggy was too small and it was four miles from the old home place to the church. During revival meetings the entire family would go every night, leaving home before the sun went down, hearing a good sermon, having a glorious time with many young people joining the church, and returning home late at night. Two of the leading pastors during Edwin Sanders' early life were Reverend C. E. Foster and Reverend Miller.<sup>30</sup>

Edwin Sanders' early teaching career had its beginning before he ever attended college. He secured a teaching certificate through examination and taught for several years before entering Peabody College. After receiving his Licentiate of Instruction, he took the Arkansas examination for teachers and taught as principal of the Atlanta High School in Atlanta, Arkansas, for four years. He personally supervised the building of a new school plant and was tendered a life contract by the

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Letter from Rebekah Hanson, Supervisor of Records, George Peabody College, to the writer, November 4, 1964.

<sup>30</sup>Interview, Sibley, op. cit.

Atlanta Board of Trustees.<sup>31</sup>

While still teaching in Atlanta, Edwin Sanders married Zenobia Longino on May 10, 1903. They had five children: Edwin Leland, Ruth, Donald Longino, Evelyn, and Edwin Sanders, Jr.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> News item in the Signal-Tribune [Minden, Louisiana] , August 18, 1936.

<sup>32</sup> Sibley, p. 36.

## CHAPTER II

### EDWIN SANDERS RICHARDSON AS A TEACHER AND SUPERINTENDENT OF BIENVILLE PARISH SCHOOLS

Records do not reveal the exact dates that Edwin Sanders Richardson began his teaching career in the Bienville Parish School system. However, on July 5, 1904, Superintendent W. U. Richardson submitted his second quarterly Public School Report for 1904 to the Bienville Parish Board of Directors.

In this report, Professor E. S. Richardson was listed as being employed to teach in Ward 5 at the Saline school. Sixty other contract teachers were listed to teach in one- and two-teacher schools throughout the area. The superintendent reported that a successful and well-attended Teachers Institute was held at Arcadia on June 6-10, 1904, just before the opening of the summer schools. In closing his report, Superintendent W. U. Richardson noted, "I am pleased to report that many excellent teachers are now teaching in the rural schools, and good results may reasonably be expected."<sup>1</sup>

A History of Saline High School points out that E. S. Richardson taught the first Saline school, in a two-room structure which was also used for a place of worship for a number of years. About thirty pupils attended the seven-grade school, which had sessions of three months. An

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<sup>1</sup>"Minutes of the Bienville Board of Directors, Arcadia," July 5, 1904.

incidental fee of one dollar was charged for entrance.<sup>2</sup>

On July 3, 1905, Superintendent Wimberly of Bienville Parish reported to the Board all outstanding contracts. Among those listed was E. S. Richardson as teacher for the three months' session in Ward 6 at Liberty Hill school. The salary was set at fifty dollars a month for three months.<sup>3</sup> It might be assumed that this was for the summer session only.

Professor Richardson was elected teacher and principal of Bienville High School for the school session beginning September 1905. At this time Bienville was a booming town with a large amount of lumber activity. In 1903, Hodge-Hunt Lumber Company had established a large saw-mill in the north section of town, under the management of Mr. Hearne. Rows and rows of "mill" houses were built near the mill and a very large two-story frame building was erected and used as a mill boarding house. This raised the number of hotels to three.<sup>4</sup>

The first school building, located at the foot of the hill from the present school plant, was a two-room frame structure with a steeple at one end. Just before Professor Richardson arrived as principal, a two-story "ell" was added. The building then consisted of several classrooms

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<sup>2</sup>A History of Saline High School, on file in the principal's office of Saline High School, November 14, 1950, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>"Minutes," op. cit., July 3, 1905.

<sup>4</sup>E. R. Hester, Bienville Parish History, Bienville Parish Planning and Development Board, p. 3.

and a large assembly room with a stage in one end.<sup>5</sup>

There were the old type double seats in the classrooms as well as in the assembly room where study halls were held at times. The Professor taught most of his classes on the stage of the assembly room, where he could keep an eye on study halls also.<sup>6</sup>

The toilets for boys and girls were backed up to a branch that ran past the school. Many mornings these houses would have to be lifted out of the branch, because during the night some mischievous boys would get together and push them over. Of course, drop-outs usually received the blame for such a deed.<sup>7</sup>

It was the duty of the boys to gather wood for fuel each winter, for the School Board did not worry about so trivial a matter as heat. Usually the boys would go out in pairs in search of pine knots and would stay out for as long as two hours while securing one arm load of wood.<sup>8</sup>

Lunches were carried to school in tin buckets, and were ordinarily left-overs from breakfast or the meals of the day before.<sup>9</sup>

Most of the students walked to school, but some came by buggy or horseback, traveling, in some cases, eight or ten miles. There was a grove of trees near the school building where many of the buggies and horses were tied. Some parents had built stables close by for their children to keep the horses. Many of the students who walked to school, walked as far as three to five miles daily in all kinds of weather.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Interview with S. G. Lucky, retired School Superintendent of Morehouse Parish, February 17, 1965.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Interview with B. S. Hamner, retired Registrar of Northeast Louisiana State College, February 23, 1965.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.      <sup>9</sup>Ibid.      <sup>10</sup>Ibid.

Water was furnished by an old type sucker-rod hand pump located on the school yard. At recess the students would get water, go to the toilet, and then participate in unsupervised play until the bell sounded for them to return to class. The only piece of playground equipment provided was a flying-jenny located on top of the hill behind the school.<sup>11</sup>

Professor Richardson was a disciplinarian of the "old school". Before he came to Bienville from Liberty Hill he made a mortal enemy of a parent because he gave the son a good paddling. It didn't matter if a student was to graduate the next day--Richardson would paddle him if he thought it necessary. There were some who said that the Professor felt he hadn't done a day's work if he hadn't given some kid a good whipping.<sup>12</sup>

Professor Richardson expected all students to go home when school was out each afternoon. He would make it extremely tough on students caught loitering around after school. There was a time when a number of students were boarding in Bienville and going to school. There was a small cafe in Bienville and a few times each year, oysters were shipped in by rail. George, one of the boarding students, heard that oysters had arrived so he stopped off at the cafe to try them. The Professor also received the news and decided to go down for oysters. George was right in the middle of his meal when he looked out and saw the Professor coming. He ran into the icehouse to hide--and became chilled to the bone before Professor Richardson finished eating. The students had considered George quite a big shot because he was a boarder, but from this time on, his

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Interview, Lucky, op. cit.

status was lowered due to the unlimited teasing he received from fellow-students because he had to hide in the ice-house.<sup>13</sup>

Professor Richardson went to a Mrs. White's room one day for a visit and there were three boys who were having severe coughing spells. One would cough for a while, and then the other. The Professor told Mrs. White that he had a good remedy for coughs of this nature and for her to send these boys to see him if they started coughing again. They stopped for a while, but finally mustered enough courage to try it again. She sent them to the Professor and they were cured with "hickory tea."<sup>14</sup>

On one occasion some of the older boys and girls decided to celebrate George Washington's birthday by playing hooky. During a regular Friday afternoon program, with a number of parents present, Professor Richardson announced that the program was unusually short because several students were still celebrating George Washington's birthday. They celebrated it for a good while by staying in after school, making up the lost time and some extra.<sup>15</sup>

The curriculum offered in Bienville High School at the time the Professor was principal and teacher consisted of art, music, history (3 credits), science (3 credits), Latin (3 credits), mathematics (4 credits), and English (4 credits). It is not known exactly how many of these were required for graduation, but it may be assumed that most of them

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Interview with Mrs. O. L. Boddie, citizen of Bryceland, Louisiana, January 25, 1965.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

were required.<sup>16</sup> Some of the courses taught by the Professor were American Literature, English Literature, mathematics, English and Latin.<sup>17</sup>

At the end of the school year all notebooks had to be bundled up and sent to Baton Rouge to be checked. However, as the school increased in number and size, this practice was discontinued.<sup>18</sup>

Richardson was the man that dreamed up the new brick Bienville High School built on top of the hill from the old location. He looked up the hill from the wooden structure that then existed and talked of what an ideal place existed further up the hill for a new school. He even went so far as to encourage the students to gather on Saturdays to clean the undergrowth from the hill, talking all the time about the possibilities of this new school. After the location was cleared, he enlisted the help of local citizens to give a big barbecue. People came from miles around to the barbecue and heard him and others talk of the new school. This created an interest in people so far away that waggonettes appeared to be a necessity.<sup>19</sup>

On August 3, 1908, the Bienville Parish School Board met in regular session with all members present. Four ordinances were passed on this date with relation to Bienville High School.<sup>20</sup>

Ordinance No. 1. The Bienville Parish School Board appropriated the sum of \$250.00 out of a special tax for building purposes, in School District No. 4, to pay for a lot on which to erect a public school building in said district. This was the site which Professor Richardson thought would be an excellent location for a new school plant.

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<sup>16</sup>Interview, Lucky, op. cit.

<sup>17</sup>Interview, Boddie, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup>Interview, Lucky, op. cit.

<sup>19</sup>Interview, Boddie, op. cit.

<sup>20</sup>Minutes of the Bienville School Board, Arcadia", August 3, 1908.



Ordinance No. 2. A committee was appointed to secure plans and specifications for the school building to be built on Block 32 in Bienville, and adjacent lands, the price for same to be paid out of the Bienville School District No. 4 Building Funds. The committee consisted of D. M. Atkins as president of the Board, W. P. Head as superintendent and office secretary, W. P. Lucky, board member, and a citizens' committee of W. O. Campbell, L. J. Lucky and H. H. Schows.

Ordinance No. 3. The president of the Board, the superintendent and W. P. Lucky were appointed as a committee to negotiate and secure a loan on the ten mill tax voted on the seventeenth day of December 1907. The president and the superintendent were also empowered and directed to issue certificates in amounts equal to the tax less the expenses of assessing and collecting same. Certificates were issued in equal amounts for the years 1907 to 1917 inclusive for the purpose of building and equipping a school house in the Bienville School District No. 4. The committee was also authorized to pledge and negotiate the tax and certificates in any form or manner that would seem best to secure the money to build and equip the school. The committee was also empowered and authorized to enter into a contract or contracts and execute same for and in the name of the Bienville Parish School Board to secure the loan for the Bienville building program.

Ordinance No. 4. The same committee appointed to carry out Ordinance No. 2 was empowered to secure sealed bids for the erection and equipping of the new Bienville High School in a manner to be determined by the members.

Two months after the Board had taken legal steps to make the Professor's vision of a new Bienville High School a near reality, he was elevated to the superintendency of the Bienville Parish School System.

The Professor had already taken and passed the State examination for superintendents' license. He had served as Parish Institute Conductor, attended the first summer school held at Louisiana State University, and had been selected by State Superintendent J. B. Aswell to teach in the Winnfield summer school for teachers. Because of this record, along with his services as teacher and principal, the Bienville Parish School Board evidently believed that the Professor was the man for the position being vacated by Superintendent Head.<sup>21</sup>

On October 5, 1908, the Bienville Board met in regular session with all members present. After handling several matters with relation to citizens' petitions for establishing community schools and a number of other routine matters, Superintendent Head called to the attention of the Board that his term of office had expired and that he did not desire re-election. The Board at once went into an election of a new superintendent for the ensuing four years. E. S. Richardson of Bienville was the only one presented and his election was unanimous. Professor Richardson was called before the Board and notified of his election. He accepted the position at a salary of \$1200.00 a year and incidental expenses. The minutes of the Board specified that the entire time of the new superintendent be devoted to the duties of the office. The first duty given the new superintendent by the Board was to arrange for the transportation of the children from Beulah school community to the Bienville school. Outgoing Superintendent W. P. Head reported a balance of \$6,498.19 in various funds.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., October 5, 1908.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

Progress in the Bienville Parish School System under the new superintendent appeared inevitable, for at the first regular meeting after the Professor's election the superintendent was authorized and instructed to equip an office in the Parish Courthouse to be used as headquarters for the superintendent and the Board. During this meeting a measure of growth in the Bienville school district took place as eleven new sections of land were added. Upon recommendation of Superintendent Richardson, the Board also allowed expenses for the high school principals of the parish attending the Principals' Conference at Baton Rouge on December 19, 20, and 21.<sup>23</sup>

When the Bienville Parish Board met on January 2, 1909, the membership consisted of B. Capers, P. C. Webb, W. L. Bailiff, W. H. Bogan, W. L. Blackwood, A. Driggers and D. M. Atkins. At this meeting The Argus was made the official organ for the School Board at the price of one hundred dollars per year, ten dollars per month was allotted for sight singing in the Bienville Public School, and a resolution was passed directing every family to pay the one dollar incidental fee as passed by the Board or be dealt with as prescribed by law.<sup>24</sup>

Under the leadership of Professor Richardson the Board met on April 6, 1909 and passed the following resolutions:

That no school district shall be created unless it shall contain as much as 16 sections of land.

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., November 30, 1908.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., January 2, 1909.

That in the future auxiliary trustees shall be appointed by this Board, granting however, that the various schools may make recommendations for their respective schools from time to time as they deem it proper.<sup>25</sup>

Petitions were presented by the citizens of Lawhon, Madden, and Piney Grove communities requesting schools in each area. The Board refused the petitions on the basis of the earlier resolution passed by the Board requiring sixteen sections of land. Lee School District No. 67 was created on the basis of the size of the geographical area involved. A measure of consolidation took place when Manning, Pleasant Grove, Tooke, Madden and Hudnall schools were discontinued and students sent to Bienville High School. The Riodel and Eureka schools were discontinued and pupils who lived too far to walk were transported to Liberty Hill and Friendship schools.<sup>26</sup>

When the Bienville Parish School Board met on May 5, 1909, it faced the responsibility of erecting a new school building in Arcadia to replace the one that had burned. A committee composed of B. Capers, E. H. Fisher, J. Rush Wimberly, W. P. Head, J. G. Wise and E. S. Richardson was appointed to fulfill this need. Richardson, Capers and Wimberly were appointed to adjust the insurance on the loss.<sup>27</sup>

The local directors appointed for the Bienville High School were L. J. Lucky, H. F. Schien, W. O. Campbell, W. J. Huckaby and W. B. Miller. A number of other directors for local schools were also appointed at this time.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., April 6, 1909.      <sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., May 5, 1909.      <sup>28</sup>Ibid.

Ringgold School District No. 5, Lawhon School District No. 71, Center School District No. 70, El Dorado School District No. 69 and Enterprise School District No. 72 were created at the May meeting to care for the needs of boys and girls in these areas. Additional sections were also annexed to the Hope School District.<sup>29</sup>

Ebenezer, Lacy and Pardue communities petitioned the Board for separate school districts, but the Board wisely postponed action until the next meeting, suggesting to them that Ebenezer, Lacy and Pardue community needs could best be met by creation of one district with two school sites properly located.<sup>30</sup>

On July 6, 1909, the Bienville Parish School Board met in regular session at Arcadia with all members present. The minutes reveal an assortment of Board actions indicating considerable development and growth in the Bienville School System. A committee was appointed for locating a school in the Lawhon school district and a petition was honored from the Oakland School community requesting that their school be discontinued and annexed to the Friendship school. The Alberta Ebenezer School District was created as suggested by the Board in the May meeting.<sup>31</sup>

A resolution was passed requesting the State Board to extend accreditation to Bienville High School. Approximately sixteen sections of land were also added to the Bienville School District with a provision for transportation for students in the area.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid.      <sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., July 6, 1909.      <sup>32</sup>Ibid.

Due to considerable growth in the Liberty Hill, Friendship and Bienville School Districts it became necessary to appoint a transportation committee, which was composed of W. T. Blackwood, E. E. Southern and E. S. Richardson. The primary responsibility of this committee was to determine transportation needs and to purchase transfer wagons to fill these needs.<sup>33</sup>

On motion the Parish Board passed the following resolution to be forwarded to the State Board of Education of the State of Louisiana:

We the Bienville Parish School Board most earnestly request that you grant us one of the proposed agricultural schools in our parish.<sup>34</sup>

The Bienville Parish School Board met in a special called meeting on August 3, 1909, to consider several items of business of an urgent nature. As a follow-up to the resolution passed in a previous meeting requesting the State Board to establish an agricultural school in Bienville Parish, the Bienville Parish School Board appropriated twelve hundred dollars or as much thereof as would be necessary for the purpose of establishing said school. The State Superintendent was also requested to locate and establish the school.<sup>35</sup>

The August meeting created the Pine Grove School District and enlarged the Bryceland School District upon the request of D. M. Adams, T. G. Dicks, and T. K. Boone. A motion was also passed limiting one-room schools to seventy-five dollars per month for the teacher's salary. Although the motion was passed, the vote indicated a differing opinion on this matter. The Board also elected the teachers as listed by Superintendent Richardson to teach in Bienville Parish for the school year

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., August 3, 1909.

1909-10. Among these were E. H. Fisher, A. J. Caldwell, Mary Mimms, J. E. Caldwell, S. G. Lucky and W. J. Trott.<sup>36</sup>

The Finance Committee made the following report to the Board in the August meeting:

We the undersigned beg to report that we have carefully checked and examined the books and vouchers of the Parish Superintendent and ex-officio Treasurer and find them to be correct.<sup>37</sup>

The composition of this Finance Committee was not revealed in the minutes.

Misunderstandings that had developed in the Bienville Parish School Board over the location of the new agricultural school led to the resignation of P. C. Webb as Board president. During the meeting held on October 5, 1909, W. T. Blackwood was elected Board president. The Board adjourned until nine o'clock the next morning and the first item of business was to repeal all previous action taken by the Board toward establishing an agricultural school. The following resolutions are presented to give the reader a possible insight into what might have happened:

Be it ordained by the Bienville Parish School Board in regular session convened, that the resolution or ordinance reading as follows: (Be it ordained by the Bienville Parish School Board in special session convened that the sum of Twelve Hundred Dollars or so much thereof as may be necessary out of the general fund be and the same is hereby appropriated for the purpose of establishing one of the Agricultural Schools proposed by the State Superintendent in connection with one of the high schools in Bienville Parish, Louisiana and the State Superintendent is hereby authorized to establish said school), is hereby recognized to be a true and verbatim of the ordinance passed by this

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

School Board. Be it further ordained that owing to contentions arising over said Agricultural School between different towns, it is ordained and declared by this School Board that the said ordinance above quoted is hereby repealed and it is further ordained that any and all notes attempting to reconsider said ordinance or any part thereof and all locations or attempts at locations is hereby repealed.<sup>38</sup>

A blanket adoption of the above ordinances passed by a vote of 5-2. Even though dissension appeared to be evident on the Bienville Parish School Board, Professor Richardson received a \$300.00 a year raise on the next motion with no opposing votes.<sup>39</sup>

Superintendent Richardson during the entire year of 1910 and part of 1911 was faced with enlarging old school districts and creating new ones where needed. After the districts were created it became a very touchy question as to where schools would be located within the various districts. Following the process of democratic board procedures, appointing committees and working with local community leaders, these problems were met one by one. Considerable sums of money were voted and processed through regular Board action to provide buildings in the Districts of Castor, Ridge, Bryceland, Ringgold, Enterprise, Pine Grove, Lee, Liberty Hill, Friendship, Saline, Beulah, Jackson, and Arcadia.

Bienville Parish School business affairs increased to the extent that Superintendent Richardson was handicapped in caring for professional needs of the parish. In regular session of the Board on October 5, 1909, Superintendent Richardson was authorized to employ Mr. Gay Martin to do such clerical work in the office of the Parish Superintendent as was needed, and to work especially with tabulations and with itemizing the special school taxes. The new clerical worker was employed for the sum of

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., October 5 and 6, 1909.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.



twenty-five dollars per month.<sup>40</sup>

In January 1909, T. A. Green became Superintendent of Lincoln Parish Schools, and he and Superintendent Richardson often worked together on supervisory visits. Superintendent Green would go to Arcadia to meet the Professor and they would go north to a number of line schools where students were attending from both parishes, such as Perryville, Henry, Indian Creek and Cross Roads. As they rode together, sometimes by buggy and often on horseback, they discussed common school problems. Superintendent Richardson visited the Lincoln Parish Schools a number of times to fill speaking engagements at assembly programs and commencement programs. Cooperation between the two superintendents was a common thing as they combined efforts to organize Junior Corn Clubs and Tomato Clubs. Cooperation became a necessity as they carried exhibits to parish and state fairs.<sup>41</sup>

Under the leadership of E. S. Richardson, the principle of better educational opportunities for all children seemed to prevail. On January 4, 1910, the Wimberly School District was annexed to and made part of the Arcadia District, thereby carrying out a measure of consolidation.<sup>42</sup>

Further action of the Bienville Parish School Board reveals a consistency in the principle of consolidation:

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., October 5, 1909.

<sup>41</sup>Interview with T. A. Green, retired school superintendent of Lincoln Parish, October 15, 1964.

<sup>42</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., January 4, 1910.

Be it resolved that petition from property taxpayers and patrons of Price School community and from the Liberty Hill community of Ward six for two new school districts to be created out of and taken from the present Liberty Hill District #32, is hereby respectfully denied for the reason that this board stands for the principle of consolidation and believes through this idea alone can we perfect a school system by which each pupil in the parish may have equal opportunities with every other child, and by which the whole student body of the Parish may all enjoy better and more educational advantages.<sup>43</sup>

As the January meeting closed, the Finance Committee, composed of B. Capers, W. H. Bogan and W. T. Blackwood made a favorable report to the Board regarding its financial condition. The financial balance was \$17,275.14.<sup>44</sup>

Even though noteworthy progress was evident during the years of Richardson's superintendency, this progress was not all smooth. Friction and misunderstandings arose between the Parish School Board and local school committees and advisory boards. Many times the superintendent was placed in precarious positions as he tried to work between local communities and the Parish Board. Problems arose that could not be worked out to the satisfaction of local school directors, and it became necessary at times for the Parish School Board to take such steps as follows:

On motion the following resolution was unanimously adopted: Whereas the Parish School Board is being confronted from time to time with difficulties and problems in school communities arising from the selection or action of Local or Advisory Boards, which nearly always results in antagonism and differences between the officers or members of the Parish Board and the local Advisory Boards, thereby rendering the solution and adjustment of such problems much more difficult of settlement and whereas that under such conditions it is

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

indispensable to have some legal representation of the Board whose authority cannot be questioned and whose acts can be reviewed and made to conform to the wisdom of the Board--therefore:--Be it resolved that we deem it necessary and that it shall be the policy of this Board in all such instances to relieve the Local Board and continue the supervision of such schools through the Parish Superintendent and the Ward Director in whose ward the trouble exists until harmony is restored.

On motion the board deems it expedient to relieve the Local Board of the Ringgold School District and to appoint no other Board for the present for the reasons recited in the foregoing resolution.<sup>45</sup>

At the regular meeting of the Bienville Parish School Board on October 11, 1910, Superintendent Richardson was authorized to initiate several requests that he had made to the Board. He was authorized to purchase maps and globes where in his judgement these were needed, and to the extent that funds would permit. Authorization was given to perfect arrangements for a wagonette transfer for transporting children of the Pardue school to Ashland school. J. Rush Wimberly was allowed thirty-five dollars expenses to Baton Rouge to attend the Board of Equalization meeting. At the close of the meeting the Professor requested an appropriation of one hundred dollars to be used during the year 1911 to pay premiums to encourage work in the Boys' Corn Club of Bienville Parish.<sup>46</sup>

On January 3, 1911, the Bienville Parish School Board passed two resolutions that conceivably reveal the feeling of the Board toward their superintendent:

Be it resolved, by the Bienville Parish School Board in regular session convened; that we view with pride and satisfaction the efficient and aggressive administration of our Parish Superintendent, Mr. E. S. Richardson; thereby,

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., August 2, 1910.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., October 11, 1910.

largely contributing to the success attained in modern and up-to-date methods and undertakings by the educational organizations, both Parish and State, and adding to the sentiment and enthusiasm prevailing in North Louisiana in educational endeavors; we especially commend his action and interest in agricultural education, by the organization and extension of Boys' Corn Clubs and other kindred work in this line.

Be it further resolved, that in view of the excessive draft upon his talent and time in this work and in recognition of his faithful and efficient performance of duty, we hereby increase his salary from \$1500.00 to \$1800.00 per annum, effective January 1, 1911.<sup>47</sup>

There was solid parish-wide support for the Bienville Parish School System in all tax elections held during the final months of E. S. Richardson's superintendency. The School Board promulgated tax election results at the April 1911 meeting for Ashland, Alberta and Murphy districts and no votes were cast against tax proposals.<sup>48</sup>

Board tabulations reveal that tax elections carried without opposition in the Holden, Bryan and Arcadia districts also.<sup>49</sup>

At the regular meeting of Bienville Parish School Board on July 5, 1911, Superintendent E. S. Richardson offered his resignation as Parish Superintendent to the Board:

Bienville Parish School Board  
Arcadia, Louisiana

Gentlemen:

I have been selected as the head of the Agricultural Extension Department of the State University, made vacant by the resignation of Mr. V. L. Roy. This position was tendered me without opposition. In view of this fact I feel it, indeed, a compliment not only to me but to you because my success as your Supt., is largely due to my promotion, which

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., January 3, 1911.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., April 25, 1911.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., July 5, 1911.

success could not have been possible had you not stood by me in every school reform. This I appreciate more than words can express. I can say without fear of contradiction, that no Supt., was ever given more loyal support than has been given by you to me.

The Bienville Parish Schools under your administration have made phenomenal strides, the equal of which is not on record in this state. Today the progressive spirit manifested by this Board is held up to the Boards of this state as an example. The promotion recently tendered me is a promotion in salary as well as in prestige, therefore in justice to myself, I feel it my duty to resign and accept the broader field where possibly I can render greater service to the state and in so doing be a benefit to myself. In my new capacity, I shall ever be ready to serve you in every way possible.

This Board since its organization has not had smooth sailing. We have had many hard fought battles for better schools; oftentimes public sentiment was strong against us. We have made mistakes, but after all we have been of one mind in that of giving to the children of Bienville Parish the best schools possible.

In spite of all these things our associations have been indeed pleasant and I esteem each of you as my warm personal friend, this being the case it is with great reluctance that I tender you this my resignation.

Yours very sincerely,  
/s/ E. S. Richardson<sup>50</sup>

The Bienville Parish School Board accepted the resignation of their Superintendent and passed the following resolution offered by Mr. B. Capers:

Be it resolved by the Bienville Parish School Board that in the call of the state for the services of Prof. E. S. Richardson in the Agricultural Extension work, made vacant by the resignation of Hon. V. L. Roy; That the Board keenly appreciates its loss of an efficient, energetic and progressive worker in the cause of education in our parish; but realizing that in that broader and higher field the cause of education will be promoted, and hence we congratulate the State Authorities in the wisdom of their selection, feeling assured that had they possessed the power to call upon any of our hundreds of educators in the state to fill this position, they could not have made a more fitting selection.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

E. H. Fisher was then elected to succeed E. S. Richardson as Superintendent of Bienville Parish Schools.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE WORK OF EDWIN SANDERS RICHARDSON IN AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE (1911-1919)

E. S. Richardson's pioneering activities in Bienville Parish School consolidation was so outstanding that the officials at Louisiana State University and the U. S. Department of Agriculture decided he should be the man to succeed V. L. Roy in the work of Agricultural Extension for the State of Louisiana.<sup>1</sup> Of course this would necessitate the Professor's directing his energies over a much larger geographical area than in the past. As the years rolled by he proved truly to be the man for the task.

In retrospect it would be enlightening to the reader to know that in 1908 the State Board of Education required that agriculture be taught in all of the elementary schools. On September 1, 1909, V. L. Roy, formerly Superintendent of Avoyelles Parish Schools, was employed as Inspector of Agriculture in the public schools. His salary and expenses were paid by Louisiana State University. Agriculture was taught in both elementary and high school departments. On February 24, 1910, Roy stated in his first report that he had been engaged chiefly in supervising in the agricultural high schools organized in the summer of 1909 and in organizing boys' agricultural clubs in the several parishes of the state. When E. S. Richardson succeeded Roy in the summer of 1911, there were

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<sup>1</sup>News item in the Ruston Daily Leader, August 28, 1936.

seven agricultural high schools on the state approval list giving instruction in agriculture.<sup>2</sup>

# I. A REPORT TO THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

Soon after Richardson entered his new field, it became his responsibility to submit a report to State Superintendent T. H. Harris on agricultural extension work in Louisiana for the years 1910 and 1911. The report advises that W. H. Balis was named Richardson's assistant in agricultural extension work, and Miss Agnes Morris was assistant in charge of Girls' Demonstration Work as well as organizer of Women's Clubs. The report was submitted on January 1, 1912, and to give the reader an understanding of the Louisiana State University philosophy and purposes as stated by the new director, the introduction written by E. S. Richardson is quoted:

In response to a great need for more efficient and practical agricultural training among the farmers of Louisiana, and imbued with the desire to reach a greater number of people and render service to every man, woman and child in the state, the Louisiana State University, in conjunction with the United States Department of Agriculture Extension, began extension work on September 1, 1909. Extension work comprises those activities that have to do with the education of persons not actually in attendance in institutions of learning. Hence, the extension services of the College of Agriculture seeks to instruct and train wives, sons and daughters, along agriculture lines. Since its inauguration the extension department of the College of Agriculture has been effectively organized and broadened in scope.

The University is heartily in accord with the great forward movement. It believes that education neither begins nor ends with a four-year college course, but is coincident with life itself. It believes that every boy and girl, man and woman, in the state is entitled to at least some of the benefits and privileges that the university has to give.

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<sup>2</sup>Minns Sledge Robertson, Public Education in Louisiana After 1898 (Louisiana State University: Bureau of Educational Research, 1952), p. 75.



The faculty of the College of Agriculture and the Experiment Station staff is composed of professional agriculturists of the highest type. These men have special and technical knowledge of the different branches taught. In the past this knowledge was given to students who were fortunate enough to be in attendance, but today, through the Department of Agricultural Extension, the benefit of their expert knowledge and their scientific experiments is carried into the home, into the field, and to all the schools throughout the state.<sup>3</sup>

Richardson outlined the organization of the Extension Department, stating that in 1909 and 1910 the activities of Agricultural Extension were largely concerned with the organization and promotion of the Boys' Corn Clubs. This work was carried on jointly with the Department of Agriculture of the United States.<sup>4</sup>

On September 1, 1910, a cooperative agreement was entered into between the University and the Office of the Farmer's Cooperative Demonstration Work, Bureau of Plant Industry, United States Department of Agriculture, in which agreement the services of Professor V. L. Roy were retained as director of the Agricultural Extension Department; and Mr. R. C. Howell, graduate of the College of Agriculture, was employed by the University as assistant, and a stenographer and typist were added to the office.<sup>5</sup>

Attempting to further bring the organizational structure of the Department up to date, Richardson gave additional personnel changes in his report. On July 8, 1911, Professor Roy resigned as director of Agricultural Extension to become President of the State Normal School in

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<sup>3</sup>"Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Education to the Governor and to the General Assembly, 1910-11, Baton Rouge," p. 91.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

Natchitoches, and Professor E. S. Richardson immediately took charge. On August 1, 1911, Mr. W. H. Balis was added to the Department to take charge of the organization of Boys' and Girls' Hog Clubs. On October 1, 1911, Mr. R. C. Howell resigned and Mr. Balis was selected as assistant to replace Howell. On November 1, 1911, Miss Agnes Morris was employed jointly by the United States Department of Agriculture and the Extension Department of the Louisiana State University as assistant in Girls' Demonstration Work.<sup>6</sup>

The first Corn Clubs were organized in 1910 by the Agricultural Extension Department with the cooperation of forty-six parish superintendents. In 1911 the membership stood at four thousand with the main purposes being to show the possibilities of corn growing in Louisiana, and to give instruction in better methods of cultivation. The highest corn yield for 1911 was reported at 150.75 bushels per acre. The members of the Agricultural Extension Department cooperated in local parish fairs as judges and by encouraging members to exhibit their projects.<sup>7</sup>

Director Richardson included in his first report the results of the National Corn Show exhibit held at Columbus, Ohio on February 1-10, 1911. The first prize offered at this show to the Boys' Corn Clubs of the South, was a Buick automobile valued at about five hundred dollars. This premium was given on the basis of quality of corn exhibited at the National Corn Show, amount of profit, cost considered, the yield obtained in one acre, and the excellence of essays giving the history of the crop. On this basis the first prize was awarded to Stephen G. Henry, Melrose,

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

Natchitoches Parish. Thus was awarded to Louisiana the honor of making the best record in corn growing in the entire South, where Boys' Corn Clubs had a membership during 1910 of 46,500.<sup>8</sup>

Other phases of E. S. Richardson's first report placed the membership in thirteen Hog Clubs over the state at 486. At the close of 1911 there were Girls' Home Economics and Gardening Clubs in twelve parishes.<sup>9</sup>

The Agricultural Extension Department was heavily involved in the dissemination of information to rural homes through the instruments of the Farmer's Literary Circular and University Press News. Because of insufficient office personnel, only one issue of the Farmer's Library was published in 1911. This issue consisted of 10,000 copies distributed among the farmers of the state. The University Press News was published monthly from September 1, 1910 and mailed only to newspapers in Louisiana and a few persons directly interested in agricultural education. The purpose of this publication was to supply the press of the state with timely articles on Louisiana Agriculture.<sup>10</sup>

The Agricultural Extension Department supplied speakers for teachers' meetings held over the state. Agricultural Extension classes were organized and held for as long as three days in various areas of the state. These classes were comprised of lectures on topics with which farmers in a particular area needed help.<sup>11</sup>

Included in the report to State Superintendent Harris was the progress made in the development of Agricultural High Schools. In 1910 the General Assembly had appropriated \$25,000 annually for the next two years to be

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 98.      <sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 102.      <sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

used in establishing agricultural departments in the secondary schools of the state. The Director of Agricultural Extension had been appointed to supervise these schools and to draft a course of study to be used. At the close of 1911 Agricultural Schools had been established in twenty-five parishes.<sup>12</sup>

The last item given in the report on January 1, 1911 was unique. The first Agricultural Demonstration Train ever to run in Louisiana was operated on the Louisiana Division of the Southern Pacific Railroad, October 15-30, 1910. The entire train, furnished by the railroad company, consisted of two stock cars, two implement cars, one general exhibit car, a Pullman sleeper, a dining car and a coach. The stock and agricultural exhibits were furnished and installed by the Experiment Stations. Lectures and demonstrations were made by members of the Agricultural College and Experiment Station and members of the Extension Department assisted by agents of the Government Demonstration work. The total mileage covered was 1001 miles with forty-two stops and a total attendance of 54,000 people.<sup>13</sup>

E. S. Richardson presented the following summary as he completed major items of his report:

#### SUMMARY

Number of miles traveled by rail-----	54,481
Number of miles traveled by team-----	1,012
Number of meetings held-----	254
Number of conferences held-----	372
Number in attendance-----	41,179
Number of lectures delivered-----	400
Number enrolled in Farmers' Short Course-----	150

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

Number of boys and girls enrolled in Agricultural and Live-stock Clubs-----	7,000
Number of Club Contests held in the State-----	50
Amount given in premiums to clubs by boards, police juries, railroad companies, banks, business men and private individuals-----	\$13,200
Number of letters written-----	5,324
Number of bulletins sent out (U.S. Department of Agriculture and Experiment Station-----	12,000
Number of circular letters written-----	14,474
Number of post cards-----	4,000
Number of editions of press news published-----	12
Number of articles written for 'press news' by Dept.-----	37
Number of articles furnished by Professors of Agricultural College-----	75
Number of copies of 'press news' sent to the papers and magazines-----	1,920
Number of articles sent through the 'press news' to press, not including daily articles-----	15,380
Number of State Agricultural Schools supervised -----	25
Number in attendance-----	400
Number of practical demonstrations made in canning vegetables, judging corn, and hogs, and field studies of corn-----	300 <sup>14</sup>

For purposes of outlook, summary, and an attempt to give credit where credit was due, E. S. Richardson concluded his first report in the work of Agricultural Extension to Superintendent Harris as follows:

The success of this movement is due in a large part to the co-operation and active assistance of many of the persons and corporations of the State interested in its progress.

The parish superintendents, without exceptions, gave willing aid to the organization of the clubs and encouragement of the members. They helped the boys to send their exhibits to the fairs; they raised money for local prizes; and they personally supervised many of the clubs.

The Fair Association, especially the State Fair officials, were generous in the past and with a growing sense of the value and importance of the work, they offer cordial support and financial aid for the coming year.

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 105-106.

Business men who have the welfare of the community in mind have also given encouragement of the best kind, cash prizes.

Every railroad in the State in giving premiums of money or live stock, or in carrying free of charge exhibits or in other ways, has shown appreciation of this effort to bring prosperity to the homes of the people.

The press has been helpful and generous and the U. S. Demonstration Agents have worked faithfully and insure good results in every community where the work has been inaugurated.

The popularity, recognition and effectiveness of this work is due in a large measure to the intelligent direction and initiative of Prof. W. R. Dodson, Dean of the College of Agriculture and director of the Experiment Station. Prof. Dodson is not only efficient and capable, but in addition he is unselfish and faithful in his efforts and most enthusiastic in his desire to see the citizens of Louisiana realize the benefit of applied science to the wonderful natural resources of the State.

This report includes the work accomplished by Mr. V. L. Roy, whose resignation was accepted in July 1911. Mr. Roy rendered intelligent and excellent service in the inauguration and promotion of this movement for two years. He was a most successful and able director.

The awakened interest on the part of these leaders in the development of Louisiana's resources and, in addition, the encouragement received from public spirited citizens is one of the most hopeful elements of the situation.

The movement is yet in its infancy, but with support from so large a proportion of influential men and women, organized associations and directors of business enterprises, the possibilities will become greater with each succeeding year and the results more and more a tangible influence in communities welfare.

The idea of conservation and development of home resources is just beginning to be understood. It is fundamental in social welfare and progress.

It is the aim of the Extension Department to teach acceptably this principle, to apply it to daily life that the people of Louisiana may realize from their own efforts the greatest returns in material wealth and in mental development.<sup>15</sup>

Thus the report submitted by Edwin Sanders Richardson revealed to the State Superintendent and the General Assembly the tremendous task of

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

conveying improved techniques for the farm to the people of the entire State of Louisiana. At the same time the new director must have been challenged with the possibilities that lay ahead for aggressive leadership. Richardson provided just this.

## II. EXPANSION OF THE DEMONSTRATION TRAIN IDEA

Immediately after assuming his duties in 1911, E. S. Richardson expanded the demonstration train idea to the extent that every railroad line operating in Louisiana furnished facilities to carry the demonstrations into every section of the state. Personnel from the Agricultural College, the State Department of Education, as well as home economics teachers from Centenary College and Louisiana Industrial Institute participated. The project covered a period of three months, the trains halting a day at each scheduled stop. Demonstrations included methods of planting and cultivating corn and forage crops, besides information on control of diseases of animals and plants.<sup>16</sup>

As the train made its scheduled stops the women among the teachers aboard discussed such subjects as food preparation, nutrition, sanitation, and health. In places where Pig Clubs and Corn Clubs had not been organized previously, this became a major phase of the work as the train made stops. The demonstration trains stimulated public consciousness not only in the rural districts but also among the business and professional interests in the large towns to an appreciation of the new methods being

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<sup>16</sup>Frederick W. Williamson, Origin and Growth of Agricultural Extension in Louisiana, 1860-1948 (Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1951), p. 61.

used in behalf of better agriculture, recognized as the basic industry of the state.<sup>17</sup>

### III. PIONEERING IN VISUAL EDUCATION

During the years 1913 and 1914 Jasper Ewing, a commercial photographer, and E. S. Richardson combined efforts to produce the first educational films in the State of Louisiana. It is believed that this was the first film production for educational use in the nation. As related by Jasper Ewing, "everyone thought we were crazy."<sup>18</sup>

There was the problem of money standing in the way of the film-making project, so Richardson and Ewing turned to Colonel Thomas D. Boyd, President of Louisiana State University. After telling him their story of the great possibilities in the use of motion pictures for educational purposes, they sat a few moments wondering what his answer would be. Then Colonel Boyd spoke up and said, "I'll tell you what I'll do, we have a little money and I'll give it to the two of you to see what you can work out."<sup>19</sup>

During 1913 and early 1914 Richardson and Ewing made three motion pictures. One was "For the Land's Sake," showing the use of winter cover crops and cultivation of cotton. Another was a dairy picture, "The Cows are Coming," made up in Homer, Louisiana, and the third was "Old Man River," showing the reclamation work after the 1912 flood. These films were first used in classes taught at Louisiana State University and

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>18</sup>Interview with Jasper Ewing, life-long worker in the field of audio-visual education, January 20, 1965.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.



at other places where electrical current was available.<sup>20</sup>

On November 6, 1914, a news article appeared in the Shreveport Journal giving detailed activities of E. S. Richardson and the Agricultural Extension Department in what was to be one of their newest and latest innovations. So that the reader might experience the exact feelings of the time in which this article appeared, it is quoted here in its entirety:

THE NEWEST AND BEST FARM  
METHODS BEING SHOWN  
AT THE FAIR

Above everything else, perhaps, the object of the state fair is to stimulate interest in the agricultural sections and to not only encourage activities, but to show the newest and most scientific methods and how those methods may best be put into operation and maintained. The demonstration of brand new methods and devices is one of the features, and among the agencies who enjoy putting on new 'shows' none occupies a more prominent position than Prof. E. S. Richardson, director of the agricultural extension department of the Louisiana State Department in conjunction with the federal department of agriculture.

At last year's fair Prof. E. S. Richardson's latest innovation shown was a large map portraying the work of the juvenile industrial clubs in the different parishes, showing the advancement in a comparative way, and it proved such a popular attraction that it has been brought back this year on a larger scale.

But the newest thing in the agricultural extension department is a device as yet officially unnamed. It is a combination affair, with an automobile illumination outfit and a moving picture arrangement playing prominent parts. The automobile is fitted up with apparatus that furnishes the power for the picture machine and the lights for the spectators to see the pictures to best advantage. The device promises such wonderful results that it has already commanded attention from the government representatives at Washington, and one of the main officials of the demonstration department, J. A. Evans, assistant special agent in charge, has visited the fair and conferred with Professor Richardson and thoroughly examined the machine and its operations.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

Mr. Evans believes that Professor Richardson has hit on the solution of the problem of giving illustrated lectures at country school houses.

As yet, there has been no opportunity for the device to be tried in a practical way in the rural communities, but the tests have proven its absolute effectiveness and usefulness. This is shown by the manner in which demonstrations are being given in the agricultural hall for benefit of the visitors. As explained by Professor Richardson, who modestly states that the machine is the result of a combination of ideas from different workers, including some of his own, the principal purpose is to solve the light problem in the country sections, where stereopticon slides heretofore have been used with difficulty and lack of entire satisfaction owing to the absence of adequate illumination.

The motor is attached to the machinery of an Overland automobile in such manner that it is easily handled and operated, the picture machine being attached on the opposite side of the car. The whole outfit can be operated by one man, but two are more satisfactory. By using this arrangement, Professor Richardson expects to cover a great deal of territory and illustrate various phases of his department's work in a manner heretofore handled with difficulty. It promises to revolutionize the country moving picture business, and enormously increase the activities of the extension department. A tour will probably be started shortly after the close of the fair, where various visitors, seeing the device in operation will take home the impression received and cause their neighbors to eagerly await a visit from the Richardson forces.

There is no set program for the machine to be operated in the agricultural building, Professor Richardson says that as the crowds gather programs will be rendered at various intervals during the day.

That the invention quickly attracted government attention was indicated by a letter from Mr. Evans of Washington, who followed this up with a personal visit to the agricultural extension department's booth in Shreveport. The letter reads:

'Washington, D. C., Oct. 20, 1914.

'Mr. E. S. Richardson, Baton Rouge, La:

'Dear Mr. Richardson--I note in a recent issue of the Press Bulletin that you have been provided with an Overland car which has been arranged to furnish light for stereopticon pictures in country school houses, etc. I mentioned this to the office of information at our meeting of the moving picture committee of the department, of which I am a member, and was requested to secure from you full particulars regarding this matter. If possible, we would like to have from the engineer who fixed up the machine, blue prints and plans showing the details of fitting up a Machine for this purpose. Will you kindly oblige me with this information at your earliest convenience? It seemed

to be the opinion of the motion picture committee that you have hit on the solution of the problem of giving illustrated lectures at country school houses.

'Very truly yours.

'J. A. Evans, Assistant Special Agent in Charge  
Office of Farmers' Co-operative  
Demonstration Work, United States  
Department of Agriculture.'<sup>21</sup>

On the night of November 20, 1914, Mr. Richardson, accompanied by W. H. Balis of the Extension Department, and Logan Moore, a senior in the electrical college, made a trip to Zachary to test the mechanism that had been devised to show motion pictures in rural schools. The outfit consisted of an automobile, a small dynamo, and a portable moving picture machine. The test proved to be a perfect success. Motion pictures for boys and girls on Pea Ridge and down on Turkey Run were now an assured fact. For a long time, members of extension departments all over the nation had pondered over the problem of how motion pictures could be carried to rural schools where electrical current was not available. E. S. Richardson demonstrated that it could be done.<sup>22</sup>

The State-Times edition published November 21, 1914 gave a step-by-step procedure in putting the new invention into operation.

The manner of operation is something like this: Given a rural school far out on the fringe of enlightenment, if there are such in the state. The dynamo and motion picture machine are loaded into the automobile, which carries the party out to the school. Having reached there, a driving pulley is attached to the crank shaft of the automobile and belted to the dynamo, a switch board is set up, and a screen and the motion

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<sup>21</sup>News item in the Shreveport Journal, November 6, 1914.

<sup>22</sup>News item in the State-Times [Baton Rouge], November 21, 1914.

picture machine are placed inside the schoolhouse, and the extension worker then has a perfectly working motion picture show miles away from town.<sup>23</sup>

The news article in closing statements related that:

The value of motion pictures has long been recognized by extension workers, but, until now, no one has been able to perfect a machine that would operate successfully at a cost not prohibitive. This contrivance used by Mr. Richardson works perfectly, and the cost of operating is trifling.<sup>24</sup>

E. S. Richardson said he would show motion pictures in every school of the state.<sup>25</sup>

During the first seven months of 1915 the Junior Extension Service of Louisiana State University visited 140 schools in forty parishes, giving programs from the auto-stereopticon and moving picture machines to an estimated attendance of 23,340 children, school patrons, and farmers. In most cases a week was devoted to each parish. Besides the educational films shown at each school, the visual programs included stereopticon slides depicting the various phases of Pig, Poultry, and Canning Club work.<sup>26</sup>

Richardson's invention became very useful in projects other than the showing of motion pictures. The current generated by the invention was utilized to provide heat for cooking demonstrations. An electric cook-stove was added to the equipment of the automobile, making possible cooking demonstrations before rural groups. The Richardson invention became an important part of home demonstration activities in areas handicapped by lack of proper facilities. Rural people in every corner of the state who

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid.      <sup>24</sup>Ibid.      <sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Frederick W. Williamson, op. cit., p. 64.

previously had no opportunity to view a "movie" were thrilled with the animated picturization of subjects that closely touched their lives as well as their livelihood.<sup>27</sup>

Richardson's innovation of the period was an expansion of the railroad demonstration, which had been restricted to communities bordering railroad lines. In spite of unimproved roads, dusty in dry weather and sea of mud in rainy periods, the motion picture carried the story of better farming to areas of the state that had never been previously reached.<sup>28</sup>

W. H. Balis worked as Richardson's assistant in Pig Club work for the entire time that Richardson served in agricultural extension. The two worked closely together, facing daily hardships as every attempt was made to take the new techniques to the farms of the State of Louisiana. There were very few cars in the state, and roads were poor. The era of pavement and blacktop was many years away and the best that could be hoped for was a strip of gravel now and then. It was an accepted fact that every time a trip was made into the country, considerable time would be spent getting out of mudholes. The big question was how many times would this happen before returning to Baton Rouge. Of course there was standard equipment--a spade or two and a prying pole long enough for leverage. One trip from Minden to Baton Rouge required two days with one night being spent in a mudhole south of Winnfield.<sup>29</sup> During one return trip to Baton

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Interview with W. H. Balis, December 19, 1964.

Rouge a complete day was spent trying to get through the Atchafalaya swamps.<sup>30</sup>

The January 23, 1949 edition of the Times-Picayune magazine section labeled Edwin Sanders Richardson as "The Grand-dad of Visual Education." In this edition was a picture of Richardson and his "touring car contraption" for showing motion picture films. Portions of this article present clearly the thoughts of E. S. Richardson as he approached the idea of motion pictures as a teaching device.

We saw a seed germinate and grow into a mature plant. The time required was 15 minutes.

The moving picture projector and the many film libraries in the state have made it possible for students in every school to learn through visual perception important facts that are dull and boring when presented on textbook pages. The State Department of Education has issued a catalog which lists over 500 films, all of which may be borrowed for use in the schools. The portrayal of the full span of plant life which we saw is one of them.

Before World War II, the use of motion pictures in visual education was widely practiced, its value recognized. Schools, factories, governmental agencies discovered movies to be great time-savers. During the war, movies played a large part in shortening the civilian-to-warrior period. After the conflict motion pictures emerged as a powerful instructive force.

But the idea of visual education is now new. It was first conceived of, tested and demonstrated 35 years ago by a man who was bred, born and reared in Webster Parish, Louisiana. Modesty restrains Dr. E. S. Richardson, now of Ruston, from making any claim to such an honor, but records speak for themselves. He will admit, however, that back there in the early part of 1913 he lay awakes many nights analyzing the plan, always reaching the conclusion that moving pictures could be put to better use than for pie-throwing.

'You know, even in 1913, thousands of people were going to picture shows every day to see comedy actors slap a villain in the face with a spattering pie. So, I began to think, if pictures are used to entertain people and make them laugh, why can't they be used to teach students?

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<sup>30</sup> Interview, Ewing, op. cit.

'Psychologists had not agreed on which one of the senses was more valuable for stimulating the mind and fixing in the memory facts that helped humans become educated. Perhaps visual perception is more accurate and lasting than the audible. A combination of the two would certainly be more valuable.'

Many questions and much coaxing had stimulated Dr. Richardson's memory and he emitted a hearty chuckle.

'You know, one day I got a whiff of roasting coffee. It made a vivid impression on my brain. A taste of dewberry pie did the same thing. Here taste and smell were most convincing, two senses we were not using at all in the field of education. And the picture-show people had thrown into our very laps an instrument that might open new ways into the minds of young people--but we were not using it.'

Such were the thoughts of Dr. Richardson 35 years ago when he entered the office of Colonel Thomas D. Boyd, president of the Louisiana State University. As director of junior extension service, Richardson had a great plan to submit to the stone-faced colonel who was famous for the vehement way he pronounced the word NO. The plan required the use of an automobile to serve the dual purpose of transportation and the operation of a dynamo that was needed to furnish electric power to operate the moving picture machine.

Not one of the state departments, nor the governor himself, owned an automobile. There were not a half dozen 'gas buggies' in Baton Rouge. Only recently a friend and the proud owner of a car had invited Colonel Boyd to drive with him to Shreveport. It was a disastrous trip, requiring three days and much walking. The president of LSU was certainly not automobile-minded.

Students had said: 'When it comes to spending state money, Colonel Boyd will squeeze a dime until the eagle screams.'

Today, there are many old grads who still think the crowning achievement of E. S. Richardson's long and useful career lies not in his being the first man to initiate moving pictures into the field of education, but definitely in the effrontery and ability he displayed in persuading the stone-faced colonel to purchase an Overland automobile, a dynamo and one of those early moving picture machines.<sup>31</sup>

Sam Mims gave Dr. W. R. Dodson, Dean of the College of Agriculture, credit for assisting Richardson in his adventure into the unexplored fields of education. He also recognized the work of Jasper Ewing, the photographer, as their technician. At the end of his article he stated:

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<sup>31</sup> Sam Mims, "Granddad of Visual Education," Times-Picayune [New Orleans], January 23, 1949.

Judging from the pictures made of their perilous journeys, Jasper Ewing not only handled a camera skillfully but used a spade with marvelous dexterity.<sup>32</sup>

After the Overland car played out, the extension service bought a truck to replace it. This was during some of the hot political campaigns of New Orleans. The political machines there had a nickname of "Many-Machines." The truck that was equipped to show pictures over the state would get stuck so many times, it was named "Many-Machine" after the political machines of New Orleans. It is not known whether the regularity of getting stuck was the reason for naming it such or whether it was because of its many uses. Possibly it was because of its adaptability to get the job done under any circumstance.<sup>33</sup>

#### IV. EXPANSION OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION

The year 1914 was the first year Louisiana received federal aid to agricultural extension work. This was the year that the late Dr. Seaman Knapp's philosophy emerged in concrete form under nationwide federal support. Prior to 1914 funds in Louisiana had been secured from allocations made to the Secretary of Agriculture, except that in the Boys' Club Work, the money came from either the State Department of Education or Louisiana State University. For Girls' Club Work funds had come from the General Education Board. It had become evident that if the new teaching was to reach its reasonable fulfillment it had to be implemented by adequate funds coming directly from the public treasury.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Interview with W. C. Abbott, former co-worker with Richardson in Agricultural Extension, January 8, 1965.

<sup>34</sup>Frederick W. Williamson, op. cit., p. 67.



The law providing the necessary funds to expand agricultural extension services became known as the "Smith-Lever Act." The law went into effect on July 1, 1914 and on August third of that year its provisions became operative in Louisiana following the signing of an agreement of understanding between Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College and the Secretary of Agriculture. The agreement merged the Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work with the Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service established at the University as a coordinate part of the Agricultural College. Dr. W. R. Dodson, Head of the Agricultural College and Director of experiment stations, was named the first director of the Extension Service under the new federally supported program.<sup>35</sup>

In 1915 the personnel that had consisted of E. S. Richardson and two or three co-workers expanded to twenty-two. Richardson's official position became Superintendent of Junior Extension Work. Now he could concentrate his efforts toward the youth of Louisiana, rather than to try to render over-all agricultural extension service to all ages of the Louisiana population. It was in this position that he served until leaving Agricultural Extension in 1919. Working directly with Superintendent Richardson were W. H. Balis, Assistant Superintendent of Junior Extension Work in charge of Pig Clubs; Alice L. Keeler, in charge of Canning Clubs; J. L. Hiers, in charge of Corn Clubs; and E. O. Edson, in charge of Poultry Clubs.<sup>36</sup>

Under the new organizational set-up Richardson and his staff worked

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

with the newly appointed county agents as much as possible rather than directly with parish school superintendents as in previous years. As early as 1911-12-13, Richardson and his co-workers traveled by train to the parishes and each superintendent was responsible for taking them to the various schools during the period of a week. Now they could utilize their new current-producing machine as well as traveling by rail to the local parishes. Work would be with county agents as soon as appointments were made.<sup>37</sup>

In 1914 the State Legislature provided funds for the employment of elementary and high school supervisors and a Supervisor of Agriculture to work in conjunction with the State Department of Education. Richardson and his staff would now have help for supervising agriculture departments over the state. E. S. Richardson had reported twenty-eight approved agriculture departments in 1912-13 and thirty-seven in 1913-1914.<sup>38</sup>

Also in 1914 a State Supervisor of Home Economics was appointed to give Richardson's department aid in supervision to home economics departments. Richardson reported forty-four departments in 1912-13 and sixty-four in 1913-14.<sup>39</sup>

#### V. A SECOND REPORT TO THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

The report presented to State Superintendent Harris by E. S. Richardson near the end of 1915 was somewhat shorter than previous reports.

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<sup>37</sup>Interview, W. H. Balis, op. cit.

<sup>38</sup>Minns Sledge Robertson, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

Certain responsibilities, previously handled by Richardson and his staff, were being assumed by county agents at the local parish level. Other duties were being assigned to additional supervisors in the State Department of Education. However, the report reveals that there was still substantial demand upon the Junior Extension Department's time and talent.

Richardson reported that the work of the Department of Junior Extension and Home Economics of the Louisiana State University, in conjunction with the United States Department of Agriculture, was concerned chiefly with the organization and promotion of agricultural and live-stock clubs among the boys and girls of the rural districts of Louisiana. The department was also to give inspection and supervisory services to the agricultural and home economics departments of the high schools in the state. It was reported that boys' and girls' club work was being carried on through local agents in the different parishes in cooperation with local school boards. The local agents were to distribute literature sent out by Richardson's department, visit the homes and demonstration plants of the club members and give them personal instruction.<sup>40</sup>

It was further reported by Richardson that in 1915 there were 2,272 members enrolled in the Corn Clubs, representing forty-six parishes; 1,812 members in the Pig Clubs, representing forty-three parishes, and 1,070 members in the Poultry Clubs, representing thirty parishes.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>"Biennial Report", op. cit., 1913-14 to 1914-15.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

Cash prizes of nearly two thousand dollars were offered at the state fair to club members who made the best records in their club work. Each competing member had to make an exhibit of his club products and submit a written account of the year's club work. The parish fairs also offered liberal prizes and premiums for club exhibits.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to the cash prizes there were offered more than one hundred scholarships to the Winter Short Course of Louisiana State University to the boys and girls who excelled in club work. These scholarships were given by the Louisiana Bankers' Association, the Hastings Seed Company, local school boards, police juries, town councils, banks, and individuals. Richardson reported these short courses as highly successful endeavors.<sup>43</sup>

During the school year the department inspected and supervised the work of forty-two agricultural schools and one hundred domestic science schools.<sup>44</sup>

Other activities engaged in by the Junior Extension Department were as follows:

1. Conducting short courses for boys and girls at school centers.
2. Conducting a short course at the University for boys and girls of the different clubs who make exceptional records in their work.
3. Conducting state corn, hog, and canning club contests at the State Fair, held at Shreveport, La.
4. Issuing printed matter in the form of circulars and bulletins for the use of teachers, farmers, school boys and girls.
5. The publication of the Louisiana State University Weekly Press Bulletin for the purpose of supplying the press of the state with available and timely articles of Louisiana agriculture.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

## VI. RESIGNATION FROM AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION

On October 1, 1919, Edwin Sanders Richardson resigned from the services of agricultural extension for the State of Louisiana.<sup>46</sup> His service had extended over a period of time when "teaching by demonstration" was being firmly implanted as a fixed practice for promoting better agricultural practices in Louisiana. The State of Louisiana had been covered many times as he and his co-workers traveled thousands of miles by rail, horse and buggy, and in their strange current-producing contraption. In spite of all this hard work and many hours of plodding through mud and dust, many of the farmers still clung to deep-rooted convictions that the solution of agricultural problems could only be resolved by the sweat of the brow. As he left his work there would be many other efficient workers to follow. Farmers who accepted new practices would teach their neighbors. There were those boys and girls who had been well-taught through club work. Many of these were now adults and would practice what they had learned. There was a new system of county agents in all the parishes of Louisiana to project on a parish basis the things that Richardson and his assistants worked at on a state-wide basis in earlier years. Progress had indeed been made since Richardson left his superintendency in Bienville Parish on July 5, 1911.

The exact reason that Richardson left his work in agricultural extension work is not known. He had advanced in salary from \$1500.00 to \$3000.00 annually.<sup>47</sup> Some believed he left because he became interested

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<sup>46</sup>From employment record of Agriculture Extension, Louisiana State University.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

in selling oil leases with his brother, Dr. Sam Richardson, back in Webster Parish. This was the endeavor he pursued until he became associated with the Webster Parish School System.<sup>48</sup>

Editorially the State-Times of Baton Rouge had the following to say about Richardson's leaving the Agricultural Extension Department:

#### POOR LOUISIANA

Louisiana people will hear with regret of further losses the Agricultural Department of the State University has sustained by the resignation of E. S. Richardson, superintendent of junior extension work, W. H. Balis, his assistant and J. A. Sims, beef cattle specialist.

Agricultural club work in the Louisiana schools has made great strides since Mr. Richardson undertook its organization nine years ago. He threw himself into the work with irresistible zeal and inspired the teachers and pupils with an enthusiasm that has been productive of great results. The advance of the state agriculturally in the past few years has been due in no small measure to his teachings.

Now he resigns, as Dr. Dodson resigned, because he sees no prospect of promotion or better financial support, in order to enter a field that offers more personal benefit. It is a pity; a very great pity, to see our corps of workers for better farming demobilized.

Meanwhile the professional politicians of the state are agitating themselves desperately over the sad things a candidate named Pleasant said about a man named Parker four years ago, and the queer company he now keeps after three giddy years with the City Machine--one a piece of history that was unimportant while fresh, the other a mere matter of personal privilege.

Hadn't the farmers of Louisiana better be looking for other lights to lead them?<sup>49</sup>

The New Orleans Times-Picayune followed with a similar editorial a week later.

#### ANOTHER EFFICIENT WORKER GONE

The agricultural college of the State University loses another efficient worker because it does not hold sufficient prospects for development.

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<sup>48</sup>Interview, W. H. Balis, op. cit.

<sup>49</sup>Editorial in the State-Times [Baton Rouge], October 5, 1919.

E. S. Richardson, who has been in the extension work of the university for the past ten years, in charge of the club organization among the school children, has tendered his resignation to President Boyd to go into business for himself.

Many other workers have quit the university recently primarily because of the lack of adequate salaries, but also because there was not the opportunity for advancement and promotion which should offer itself in a fast growing and developing agricultural college.

No university can become a great institution unless it can attract and hold the best of talent in its faculty and aside from the fact that an instructor who trains the youth and shapes the character and mind of future citizens is entitled to a good salary, the educational institutions are going to have to pay proper salaries to hold these instructors. The business world is bidding for these men of trained minds. There is no longer a prejudice in the business world against the college professor. The world recognizes them today for what they are--perhaps the keenest-minded and most industrious of any class of men, and they are not going to remain in their professions unless the work holds out the hope of better financial reward.<sup>50</sup>

#### VII. DEATH OF JAMES SANDERS RICHARDSON

Approximately three months after Edwin Sanders Richardson resigned from agricultural extension work, his father passed to his final reward. James Sanders Richardson died on December 23, 1919 and was laid to rest in the Gilgal cemetery only four miles from Edwin's boyhood home.<sup>51</sup> Dr. M. E. Dodd conducted the funeral and, remembering the Civil War experiences of James Sanders, made the following remarks:

Suppose this good man had been dead at Shiloh as reported. The statistician would have shown just one more casualty and no one would have thought of just one more casualty. But this is not the picture. If he had been dead, this good woman would not have had him as a husband, these five children would not have been born and on it would go from generation to generation. Instead, their service to the state and world will build up from one generation to the other, all due to the fact it was a mistake about his death.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Editorial in the Times-Picayune [New Orleans] , October 12, 1919.

<sup>51</sup>Interview, Mary Lou Sibley, op. cit.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER IV

### SIXTEEN YEARS AS SUPERINTENDENT OF WEBSTER PARISH SCHOOLS (1921-1936)

The Webster Parish School Board on January 4, 1921 passed two resolutions which represented the beginning of a new period of administration and educational activity within the parish. This period of progress and accomplishment extended over a period of sixteen years.

That Mr. E. S. Richardson be elected to fill the unexpired term of the late Superintendent Thomas W. Fuller to July 1, 1921.

That Mr. E. S. Richardson be elected to fill the office of superintendent for a term of four years, beginning July 1, 1922.<sup>1</sup>

The members of the school board were intensely interested in the educational welfare of the children in the parish. Therefore they exerted considerable effort in the selection of a superintendent who had the qualifications for the office, in training, experience, and personality.<sup>2</sup>

When E. S. Richardson was elected superintendent, he found that the Board President had somewhat the same philosophy as he toward the over-all educational program. W. G. Stewart, President of the Board, had an abiding faith in and loyalty to the cause of education in Webster Parish. He consistently stood for what he thought was the best interest of the

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<sup>1</sup>"Minutes of the Webster Parish School Board, Minden," January 1, 1921.

<sup>2</sup>J. L. Cathcart, "The Development of Education in Webster Parish", (unpublished Master's Thesis, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, 1938), p. 13.



boys and girls regardless of public opinion. He believed that the final answer to all matters of administration was to be the decision of the Board. Mr. Stewart believed that every child had a right to be educated and his desire was to extend educational opportunities to all children. He devoted considerable time to the study of school administration problems and was considered by many to be one of the best informed school board members in the state.<sup>3</sup>

#### I. CONSOLIDATION IN WEBSTER PARISH

With a Board thoroughly sympathetic toward the education of all children in the parish, one of the first moves in 1921 was a resolution calling for an exhaustive survey and study of the existing school buildings and educational facilities, centers of population, roads, and other important factors affecting the educational welfare of the children.<sup>4</sup>

Superintendent Richardson quickly moved to complete the survey and reported to the Board that there were thirty-nine school centers, of which thirty-five were one-to three-room schools. He reported that in many cases these schools were taught by teachers having little or no experience. With such limited school opportunities the country children were forced to be content with an elementary education, unless their parents were financially able to board them away from home so that they could attend one of the four high schools then existing in the parish. There were significant differences in the facilities of the elementary

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<sup>3</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., November 3, 1925.

<sup>4</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 15.

grades of the thirty-five small schools as well as of the four high schools.<sup>5</sup>

Richardson convinced the School Board of the gross inequalities of the educational opportunities that existed within the parish. He also convinced the Board that such inequalities were unfair and undemocratic and should be corrected. As a result of this survey, the Board authorized a campaign of school publicity among the people and used as a slogan: "Equal educational opportunities for all the children of the country at equal cost." The campaign resulted in a general change of attitude among the people of the wealthier centers of the parish.<sup>6</sup>

A business-like program of consolidation was planned which would permit every child in Webster Parish to live at home and enjoy the same advantages of education being given those more fortunate children living near one of the high schools. This program meant that the wealthy centers would assist in the maintenance of the schools in the poorer sections of Webster.<sup>7</sup>

The publicity campaign was carried on through news media, circular letters, addresses by prominent persons interested in the schools, and by personal contact.<sup>8</sup> This publicity was highly successful, as evidenced by the results. By 1925, Webster Parish had been divided into ten high school communities. The number of high schools had increased from four to ten,

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>6</sup>E. S. Richardson, "Webster's County Unit." The Southern School Journal. XXXVI (April, 1925), 16.

<sup>7</sup>E. S. Richardson, "The County Unit As It Functions in Webster Parish, Louisiana." Georgia Education Journal. XXII (February, 1930), 13.

<sup>8</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 17.

and twenty-four small school centers had been abandoned. Only seven small schools remained and these were closely affiliated with established high schools. Transportation was provided by forty buses. A number of other things happened that were good for the overall development of Webster Parish. There were increased demands for the voting of taxes for new school buildings and the sentiment for good roads became stronger. There was a general change of attitude toward the feeling that "good education" was everyone's responsibility.<sup>9</sup>

On March 7, 1922 the Webster Parish School Board took advantage of Act 45 passed by the Special Session of the Legislature of Louisiana in 1921 permitting millage assessments on real estate. A resolution was passed calling a special election in Cotton Valley School District Number 12 of Webster Parish. The purpose of the election was the issuance of bonds by the district amounting to \$60,000.00 to run sixteen years at not more than six per cent interest, to purchase necessary lands and to erect, equip and furnish a school building at Cotton Valley.<sup>10</sup> Results of the election gave thirty-three votes with a property valuation of \$160,330.00 for the issue, with none opposing.<sup>11</sup>

Minden District voted a bond issue on April 5, 1922 for \$210,000.00 to run ten years at not more than six per cent interest, for a school plant. This election carried by a heavy majority, although it was not one hundred per cent as was the Cotton Valley vote.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Richardson, "Webster's County Unit." op. cit., 17.

<sup>10</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., March 7, 1922.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., April 15, 1922.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., April 17, 1922.

The elections at Cotton Valley and Minden were examples of the sentiment throughout the parish for equal education for all children of Webster.<sup>13</sup>

Procedures followed by Superintendent Richardson and the Board in improving their school system were indeed wise. An election for the issuance of bonds for physical plants was never called until a sufficient number of voters in a particular district so petitioned. Neither the superintendent nor the Board ever insisted upon the construction of a building, but they did keep the needs of the children ever before the people. Usually, a meeting would be held in the school, and the parish officials would meet with the patrons and advise them as to the children's needs. Always, proposed plans would be presented and studied before an election so that the people might know what they could expect. All contracts were let on a competitive basis to bonded contractors, so that minimum costs would be assured.<sup>14</sup>

Local building committees were dispensed with by the Board, and a qualified architect was employed to plan and supervise the construction of all buildings throughout the parish. This resulted in a uniform, well-planned system of buildings over the entire system.<sup>15</sup>

By 1931 the seven remaining small schools had been discontinued and the consolidation program was complete. The white educational system of

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<sup>13</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Catechism on Webster Parish Schools. Mimeographed material in office of the Superintendent of Webster Parish Schools, April 17, 1922.

Webster Parish was made up of high schools at Shongaloo, Evergreen, Minden, Dubberly, Heflin, Springhill, Sarepta, Cotton Valley, Doyline, and Sibley. All high schools had been built at a combined cost of \$1,041,000.00 and with the exception of Evergreen were of brick construction. A total of 187 classrooms had been provided within these high schools that existed on 178 acres of land. All high schools were State approved with Minden, Springhill and Cotton Valley being members of the Southern Accrediting Association. Teachers' homes were provided on all school sites with the exception of Dubberly. The Webster consolidated school system consisted of ten high schools served 620 square miles.<sup>16</sup>

As the Webster Parish school system developed on a parish-wide basis, voting of maintenance taxes was essential. Under the leadership of Superintendent Richardson this task was met successfully. On August 7, 1923, the Board moved for an election for additional maintenance tax of two mills.<sup>17</sup> A parish-wide tax of five mills had been voted as early as 1919.

The reasons given for this additional tax were:

1. The future development and the prosperity of the United States depends upon the progress and the development of our public school systems.
2. The parish is in need of additional funds, particularly in our high schools.
3. The number of rural children transported to the high schools is more than three times the number transported three years ago.

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<sup>16</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 21-22.

<sup>17</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., August 7, 1923.

4. The enrollment in the high schools has increased 45 per cent.

5. The number of high school teachers has increased 100 per cent due to two schools being placed on the list of the Southern Accrediting Association, to an increased number of pupils attending high school, and by adding five new high schools.

6. The qualifications of teachers have been raised considerably.

7. One new high school will be added as soon as the building is completed.

8. Increased insurance, fuel, transportation, upkeep of buildings and grounds, and salaries of high school teachers.

9. The balance of funds from last year has been used.

10. The assessment remains the same, and the state quota has decreased from \$7 to \$6 per educable.

When the School Board promulgated the results of the election September 19, 1923 the results were declared as follows: For, 391 votes with a property valuation of \$1,117,136; Against, 191 votes with a property valuation of \$439,736.<sup>18</sup>

On April 16, 1928 the Webster Parish School Board called an election to renew the five mills voted in 1919 and the two mills voted in 1923. The results of this election were: For, 426 votes with property valuation of \$1,265,856; Against, 43 votes with property valuation of \$80,993.<sup>19</sup>

A special election was called on November 12, 1929 to submit to voters a proposal of a one mill special tax for nine years to provide additional aid to the schools of the parish. Five hundred and fifty-nine votes with property valuation of \$1,445,364 were cast in favor of the assessment; 280 votes with property valuation of \$828,253 were against the measure.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., September 19, 1923.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., May 19, 1928.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., December 17, 1928.

As revealed by School Board minutes and election results, the Webster Parish School System under Richardson's leadership received continuous support of its people.

## II. SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Consolidation of schools presented the problem of transporting a number of children who had formerly walked to the small community schools. At the beginning of this period of consolidation, there were few roads which could be used during all months of the year, especially during winter months. One of the major results of the publicity campaign for better schools was the steady development of the demand for better roads. Special road taxes were voted, and if road conditions did not permit the operation of a school truck, a wagonette was placed in operation so that boys and girls could get to school.<sup>21</sup>

Bus routes were given a very prominent place in the original planning of the parish-wide system of schools. A committee of Board members appointed on September 5, 1922 to investigate and determine routes, made their report on October 3, 1922. They reported that they had made the investigation and had fixed the routes they thought most suitable for the community concerned.<sup>22</sup>

A special appeal was made to the friends of education to assist the Police Jury in every way possible to improve the roads in order that the school buses could operate efficiently. It was reported that every white child in Webster Parish could attend a State approved high school and spend

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<sup>21</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>22</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., October 3, 1922.

the night at home. Thirty-five school transfers were reported in operation in April 1924, but they were greatly handicapped because of roads.<sup>23</sup>

Every effort was made to employ responsible persons to operate the transfers. In most instances men were employed, but in a few cases boys were permitted to drive. When the Board met on January 5, 1926, it directed the superintendent to continue his efforts to secure men drivers as soon as possible.<sup>24</sup>

All transfers were owned by the persons operating them. The School Board aided the operators by endorsing their notes at the bank. E. S. Richardson and J. B. Luck, of Minden, teamed their efforts to work out the details for a safe, comfortable bus body shortly after the beginning of the use of school transfers. Mr. Luck manufactured these bodies in his shops and earned a wide reputation for safe school truck construction.<sup>25</sup>

Superintendent Richardson made every effort to safeguard the lives of the children while they were on the buses. On November 1, 1927, the superintendent was authorized to have the sign, "Slow, School Bus", printed on each bus. Richardson kept the idea of safe driving habits ever before his drivers through circular letters. They were constantly reminded that accidents that happened to other drivers could have happened to them.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., April 1, 1924.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., January 5, 1926.

<sup>25</sup>News item: "Luck Made School Buses Mounted on Ford Trucks." Signal-Tribune [Minden], August 27, 1930.

<sup>26</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., November 1, 1927.



Richardson sent a circular letter to all truck drivers on January 3, 1929, reminding them to give their steering mechanisms the "once over." Drivers were warned that the driver who failed to stop before crossing a railroad was automatically discharged if the fact was proven. Circular letters to the bus operators were monthly necessities to Superintendent Richardson. When accidents occurred in other areas of the state, he always brought them to the attention of his drivers.<sup>27</sup>

On February 4, 1930, Richardson recommended and the Board passed the following resolution:

. . . to further increase the safety of the school children in buses, red flags be placed on the front and on the rear of buses as warning to the public to drive carefully.<sup>28</sup>

Before the opening of each school session the drivers usually assembled in Minden to discuss rules and regulations of good driving. While the drivers were meeting, the buses were checked by competent mechanics to see that they were in good mechanical condition. Buses were also checked by the sanitation department to see if they were clean. License plates were issued from the Board office. Books and supplies were sent by bus on their return trips to the respective schools.<sup>29</sup>

Drivers were paid wages based on the number of children transported, the length of the route, and the class of road over which they traveled. If a child lived one and one-half miles or more from school he was transported. If some instances children living closer were permitted to ride if the bus

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<sup>27</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>28</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., February 4, 1930.

<sup>29</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 36.

was not crowded. The number carried by a bus at one time ranged from thirty to seventy-five, depending on road conditions and the bus size.<sup>30</sup>

During the 1920-21 school session, seven vehicles in operation carried 150 of the 1361 registered students to various schools at a total cost of \$10,404.85. During the 1926-27 school session fifty-one vehicles in operation were carrying 4131 registered students to area schools at a total cost of \$51,181.18. In the 1935-36 school year there were 2279 of the 3740 registered students being transported by forty-three vehicles at a cost of \$37,493.65.<sup>31</sup>

### III. TEACHERS OF WEBSTER PARISH

The move for school consolidation had pointed out the fact that many of the teachers in the small schools were not as well prepared to teach as were those teaching the same grades in the high schools. This was no particular fault of anyone because there were differences in living conditions, physical equipment, teaching equipment, and school classifications. It was natural for the better prepared teacher to seek employment in the larger schools, thus causing this imbalance. They were also paid better salaries than those teaching in the rural schools.<sup>32</sup>

Early in 1921 under Richardson's influence, policies were adopted by the School Board to bring the teachers of all schools under a uniform salary schedule which would be based on the qualifications of the teacher and teaching experience. Teachers already employed were encouraged to continue the kind of preparation which would raise their certification level.

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<sup>30</sup>Catechism on Webster Parish Schools, op. cit., December, 1930.

<sup>31</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

The qualifications of new teachers were closely checked. All who had not attained the level of two complete years of college work were advised to continue their college preparation.<sup>33</sup>

On April 5, 1921, the Webster Parish School Board adopted the minimum salary schedule for teachers that had previously been adopted by the Louisiana Teachers Association at the 1920 convention.<sup>34</sup>

The attitude of the Webster Parish school administration toward better qualified teachers was reflected in a resolution passed by the Board on May 2, 1922. The resolution read:

All teachers elected must have the proper credentials to teach in the positions named, because to teach in the high schools it is necessary to have the amount of credits required . . . to discourage the employment of second grade certificate teachers and to eliminate the third grade certificate teacher in the Webster schools.<sup>35</sup>

During the years that followed, better qualified teachers were employed, and those who needed upgraded certificates were encouraged to improve their educational qualifications by attending summer schools and through extension classes. Teachers from Webster were given priority for jobs when their qualifications were high enough. Standards were not lowered to accommodate them. Teachers were never returned to their home towns to teach. An attempt was made to place two or more men teachers in every high school. Teachers in rural and city schools alike were on the same salary schedule.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid.      <sup>34</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., April 5, 1921.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., May 2, 1922.

<sup>36</sup>Catechism on Webster Parish Schools, op. cit., December, 1930.

The Webster Parish School System in 1930 faced a financial problem that seemed to be common to all institutions requiring money for operation. Revenues were found to be on the decrease, but expenditures continued to rise. Salary adjustments appeared to be of utmost necessity. Previous to this time the Board had never found it necessary to delay payment of teachers' salaries, nor to issue script which might be discounted. Superintendent Richardson and Mr. John M. Foote were given the responsibility to making a thorough study of the school system and to make definite recommendations so that the crisis could be met.<sup>37</sup>

On May 6, 1930, the Board passed a resolution favoring recommendations of the Richardson-Foote study:

That, due to the financial conditions and in as much as we must effect a material saving in our parish during the next three years, this resolution is offered: It is the sense of this board that we favor a proposition of reducing salaries; and that we effect a reorganization plan based on the suggested plan submitted by Superintendent Richardson and Mr. John M. Foote of the State Department of Education; the high schools be administered on a more economical educational basis; and that there be a reorganization of the truck schedule.<sup>38</sup>

Mr. Foote had made four suggestions to the members of the School Board previous to the May meeting, in a letter dated April 30, 1930. He suggested that the high school departments of the three smallest high schools be consolidated with the larger high schools, that the elementary departments of the three small schools could be increased by changing bus routes, that the overall transfer system be reorganized and the salary of drivers be revised downward, and that adoption of a larger pupil-teacher ratio could require the employment of fewer teachers.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>38</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., May 6, 1930.

<sup>39</sup>Letter from John M. Foote, State Department of Education, to Webster Parish School Board, April 30, 1930.

The Board did not consolidate the smaller schools, but it did put into effect the other suggested items of reorganization. The number of teachers was reduced by approximately eight and one-third per cent; salaries were reduced by twenty-five per cent; the pupil-teacher ratio was increased by thirty per cent, and transportation cost was reduced forty per cent. Even though salaries were reduced, the teachers continued to receive real money (instead of script) for their services.<sup>40</sup>

Superintendent Richardson's leadership in making the teachers aware of the problems of the time caused their attitude to be of a commendable nature. This was an effort of the entire system. The main objective was to retain school efficiency at a high level. The teachers voted a resolution of confidence in the school administration and expressed a willingness of continued cooperation to meet the problems that confronted the schools.<sup>41</sup>

On May 2, 1930, the following letter was written to the Webster Parish School Board expressing confidence in the program of reorganization:

We are familiar with the past and present financial conditions of Webster Parish School Board. We know that for the future, schools must operate at a substantial annual reduction. We have examined carefully the proposed retrenchment and reorganized plan submitted, and in our judgement it is necessary, sensible, feasible, and economically sound.

/s/ R. H. Miller, President of Bank of Minden  
/s/ R. A. Baker, Cashier, Bank of Webster<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>News item in the Shreveport Journal, February 13, 1933.

<sup>41</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>42</sup>Letter, R. H. Miller and R. A. Baker to Webster Parish School Board, May 2, 1930.

Near the close of 1932 many taxpayers were unable to pay their taxes, causing a shortage in funds. A plan was proposed on December 29, 1932 to delay the opening of schools after Christmas until January 16, 1933. This plan proposed that schools be operated for four months and that teachers teach a six-day week rather than five. All School Board employees were called upon to contribute the equivalent of a month's salary so that the schools could remain open.<sup>43</sup>

The teachers agreed to work according to the plan presented. They were interested in the educational welfare of the children to the extent that they were willing to sacrifice.<sup>44</sup>

During the 1932-33 session the Board was confronted with the most serious financial problems it had ever faced. The impact of the great depression was being felt everywhere. Banks were closed all over the country and Webster Parish banks were hit as well.

To meet the crisis, the Webster Parish School Board passed the following resolution in the April meeting of 1933:

Be it resolved that the Webster Parish School Board issue certificates of indebtedness to meet salaries due to teachers and employees of the Board, said certificates to be issued in denominations ranging from five dollars to one hundred dollars, and bearing interest at the rate of 8 per cent per annum from date until paid; and that said certificates be made payable on, or before, September 1, 1933.<sup>45</sup>

All details of the above resolution were discussed with the teachers and they were given an opportunity to express their opinions. After the

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<sup>43</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., December 29, 1932.

<sup>44</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>45</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., April 8, 1933.

teachers expressed a willingness to cooperate with the arrangement, the Board adopted the plan. Certificates were issued and teachers who could afford to hold them collected principal and interest in cash at the time of maturity. Some teachers were able to sell their notes at face value without having to discount them. Merchants who could afford to invest, willingly accepted the certificates in payment for merchandise or on accounts. Certain business people offered to buy the certificates at amounts they could afford.<sup>46</sup>

When the school year 1934-35 closed, the Board had sufficient funds to restore to the teachers a part of that which had been lost by salary reductions. A resolution was passed and checks were mailed to the teachers. The resolution was as follows:

Resolved, that at this time the Board give the employees of Webster Parish School Board an additional compensation for their services for the current year, 1934-35.

Resolved, that a 7½ per cent restoration be given to the employees of Webster Parish School Board on this year's salary, being a restoration of that much of the reduction of salaries now in effect.<sup>47</sup>

Teachers had been encouraged each year to attend summer school in order to better their educational qualifications. It was never the intent to force any teacher to return to school. In April of 1936 the Board passed a resolution giving each teacher who attended summer school a bonus of fifty dollars.<sup>48</sup> The parish school system was highly commended by State Superintendent T. H. Harris for this forward step.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>47</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., May 29, 1935.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., April 8, 1936.

<sup>49</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 47.

During the superintendency of E. S. Richardson, the teachers of Webster Parish proved to be cooperative, willing, and desirous of giving better service to those being served. Beginning in the school year 1923-24, the Webster Parish teachers joined the Louisiana Teachers Association in a body and continued this practice throughout Richardson's administration.<sup>50</sup> Each year the resolution for joining came from the teachers, who requested the superintendent to deduct the dues from the second month's salary.<sup>51</sup>

When E. S. Richardson became superintendent of Webster Parish schools, the teaching force of the white schools consisted of 110 teachers, eighteen with Bachelor's degrees, thirty-two with Two-Year degrees, forty-six with certificates by examination, and nine with emergency certificates. When Richardson left the superintendency, the teaching force totaled 127 teachers, four with Master's degrees, sixty-five with Bachelor's degrees, thirty with Three-Year degrees, twenty-six with two years of college, one with one year of college and one with less than a year of college.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to spending many hours in conferences, teachers' meetings, and administering the Webster Parish School System, Richardson found time to return to George Peabody College for Teachers at Nashville, Tennessee, during the summers of 1928, 1929, 1932, 1933, and 1935. Fifty-five quarter hours of credit from Louisiana State University and ninety-nine quarter hours earned for the Licentiate were accepted when he was admitted

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<sup>50</sup>"Webster Listed as 100% Parish," Louisiana Schools, 1923-36.

<sup>51</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit.

<sup>52</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 49.



to George Peabody College in the summer of 1928. On August 24, 1935, E. S. Richardson was awarded the Bachelor of Science degree from George Peabody College for Teachers.<sup>53</sup>

#### IV. PRINCIPALS OF WEBSTER PARISH

Superintendent Richardson felt that the position of school principal should be held as one of definite responsibility and that the position should be magnified and dignified. He was convinced that all work with the school should be channeled through the principal. The principals were consulted in matters pertaining to employment of teachers as well as their re-employment each year. All matters pertaining to the work and activities of teachers were passed through the hands of the principals. The Board established policies but the principals were usually consulted, in an advisory capacity, by Superintendent Richardson before definite and final action was taken. One of the early resolutions of the Board was to the effect that persons wishing to visit the schools should first have the permission of the superintendent and the principal. Representatives of the auxiliary agencies, visiting schools in the interest of their work, reported first to the principal of the particular school before beginning work. This practice was used by the parish supervisor and the superintendent.<sup>54</sup>

Due to the policy of considering the principal in an advisory capacity before Board policy was passed, there arose the need for an organization of

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<sup>53</sup>Letter from Rebekah Hanson, Supervisor of Records, George Peabody College, November 4, 1964.

<sup>54</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 51.

the principals early in the administration of E. S. Richardson. The idea for organizing originated with Superintendent Richardson for the expressed purpose of teacher participation in matters with which all were concerned. The principals did organize in 1923 with the intention of drawing the schools into a closer understanding and appreciation of problems common to all or peculiar to any one school. Richardson was voted a charter member of the first Principals' Club and he missed very few meetings during his tenure of office. When he was absent, he usually sent a message saying, "Sorry to be unable to meet with you, but I am there in spirit."<sup>55</sup>

Every effort was made to list the major items for consideration before the opening of a meeting. Sometimes matters arose during the meeting, or were proposed by some individual. Superintendent Richardson would discuss items previously considered by the Board and other matters that held particular interest for various members. All new projections to come before the Board later were discussed by Richardson. If the teachers were directly involved, the principals would take the discussion back to them and relay reactions back to the superintendent for his consideration before placing it before the Board.<sup>56</sup>

Superintendent Richardson felt that each principal had a major role to assume in the parish supervisory program. On February 7, 1922 he recommended that the principals be allowed expenses to attend the high school conference held in Baton Rouge on February 2-4, 1922.<sup>57</sup> Similar recommendations were made for them to attend a conference in New Orleans

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>57</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., February 7, 1922.

on January 24-25, 1924<sup>58</sup> and the 1927 meeting of the National Education Association in Dallas.<sup>59</sup> These recommendations were unanimously adopted by the Webster Parish School Board. To facilitate the organized supervisory program conducted in Webster Parish by Dr. C. W. Knudsen during the 1928-29 session, it was also recommended that the Board pay any principal a five per cent bonus if he would attend Peabody College during the summer of 1929.<sup>60</sup> Several principals took advantage of this action.

Superintendent Richardson encouraged each principal to visit nearby parishes to learn what others might be doing that could be beneficial to Webster Parish. In the spring of 1935 each principal with the supervisor visited another parish. These visits were discussed at Principals' Club meetings, and a number of changes were initiated because of them.<sup>61</sup>

E. S. Richardson believed that promotions among the principals should be filled from within the ranks. On January 1, 1934 when J. E. Harper resigned the principalship of Minden High School, Richardson made the following recommendation and it was adopted by the Board:

That, it is the judgement of this body that this position should be filled from our own ranks by a series of promotions.<sup>62</sup>

As a result, the principal at Springhill went to Minden, the principal at Cotton Valley went to Springhill, the principal at Shongaloo went to Cotton Valley, and one of the more experienced teachers went to Shongaloo

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., January 2, 1924.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., March 8, 1927.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., May 7, 1929.

<sup>61</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>62</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., January 2, 1934.

as principal. The Board continued this general policy of promotion from within the ranks throughout the balance of Richardson's superintendency. At the close of 1936, there were six principals of the ten employed who had served as teachers within Webster Parish.<sup>63</sup>

Practices of this nature encouraged the members of the Principals' Club to make every effort in performing the desires of Superintendent and the Board, and to enter into the spirit of the original plans for a truly parish-wide school system.<sup>64</sup>

## V. UTILITY SERVICE

On January 2, 1923, Richardson was given authorization by the Board to carry out his recommendation for a utility service to be housed in the basement of the domestic science cottage of Minden High School.<sup>65</sup> This would represent a new function of the administrative forces of Webster school system. In March of that year another recommendation was authorized in the establishment of a parish book store to handle all textbooks and other necessary items for the operation of Webster schools.<sup>66</sup>

Superintendent Richardson always kept the patrons informed about new movements of the Board and for this reason a letter was sent to the patrons of the various schools concerning the establishment of the parish book store. He stated:

Much time has been lost to the children, especially at the beginning of a school session, because of the inability

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<sup>63</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 57.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.      <sup>65</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., January 2, 1929.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., March 6, 1923.

to purchase supplies and textbooks from local merchants. Complaints have been received from the parents relative to the congested condition and rush at the beginning of the session for books and supplies. The storage room has been equipped with shelves and tables to facilitate the handling of large quantities of supplies from which they can be transferred to the schools as needed by the utility man whose duties are all that his title implies.<sup>67</sup>

Further developments of the parish store were related by J. L. Cathcart as follows:

It might be considered that the parish store led to the establishment of regularly employed utility service. Before this time, emergency work required which could not be done by the janitors necessitated the employment of a person for that particular job. In the beginning, a full appreciation of this utility service was not realized. The man employed was prepared to make only the minor repairs and aid in other things as: transferring of desks from one school to another, repair desks and chairs, oil all floors in the parish schools, replace window panes, paint walls, hang shades, install stoves, paint blackboards, and other such duties. He had a truck which was used in his work exclusively.

In 1925, Mr. Alma N. Knight, was qualified and prepared to do electrical work, plumbing work, read blueprints and construct buildings, and do other types of work requiring a high degree of training was employed. This man was also a cabinet and furniture builder, who saved the board hundreds of dollars in repairing and building school furniture. Utility service was reorganized under him for the purpose of rendering the schools (white and negro) of Webster Parish with efficient service at a moment's notice, as nearly as possible.

The utility service was to maintain each school plant in the parish from foundation to roof. Special emphasis was given to classroom equipment in the maintenance of pupils' desks, blackboards, window shades, heating, lighting, and floors. Approximately \$2,000 covered the cost of this parish-wide service for the nine months term, although this man was employed for twelve months.

A centrally located warehouse, work, and repair shop was maintained in Minden. Tools of all kinds and machinery for special wood work were supplied for the work carried on by the utility men. A telephone was placed in this shop so that any principal in the parish might contact him when necessary. Extra supplies and equipment were stored in the warehouse. No

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., August 7, 1923.

school owned the furniture and equipment in that particular school, which allowed the utility man the privilege of taking it from a school where it was not being used to another school where it was needed, or, else he stored it in the warehouse.

All furniture, including shelving, tables, cabinets, magazine stands, newspaper racks, and bulletin boards, found in the parish libraries were constructed through the utility service. Almost half of the commercial equipment and furnishings had been manufactured in the shop at a savings of approximately fifty per cent of the cost from supply houses. The utility man employed all local labor and used local supplies in so far as possible.

This utility service was closely related to the safety programs of the schools, as he serviced the stairways, building entrances, playground equipment, and other places related to safety.

The duties of the utility man included the keeping in repair of water systems, plastered walls and ceilings, window sashes, and plumbing. The water system alone is worthy of consideration when it is realized that over a million gallons of water flowed through the water systems of the ten high schools each month.<sup>68</sup>

## VI. SOIL EROSION PROJECT

Soil Erosion offices had been opened in Minden by the federal government, and Superintendent Richardson had closely observed the work being done by this organization. He conceived the idea of having the schools work with these offices in order that the boys might receive direct benefits in soil conservation methods by observing the work under the direction of skilled engineers and farm experts. A majority of the boys attending high schools lived on farms, or were closely association with farm life. The soil on the hill farms of these boys was rapidly being lost through erosion.<sup>69</sup>

Superintendent Richardson discussed with the engineers in charge the possibilities of demonstrations in the schools showing the various kinds of work being carried on. The engineers felt it was a good idea and

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<sup>68</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., pp. 60-62.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

obtained the approval from federal authorities to work out and execute a plan of cooperation with the schools.<sup>70</sup>

Richardson presented the plan for the schools' involvement with the Soil Erosion Service to the Webster Parish School Board and received full endorsement. The plan provided for practical experience in building brick and pole dams, running levels, planting grasses to bind the soil, and other soil erosion-prevention practices.<sup>71</sup>

On January 12, 1935, Mr. Dee and Mr. McKean, of the Soil Erosion Service, met with the principals at their monthly Principals' Club meeting. Plans were discussed to have a specialist in each field come into each school once a month. This specialist would explain procedures to a group of thirty or forty boys and then take them into the field. Previous arrangements for a place to work was to be made by the principal. The things discussed in the school room would be put into practice in the field. This gave the boys an opportunity to actually do the work. Later, they were to be given an opportunity to see the results of their work.<sup>72</sup>

Actual procedures followed in the field are clearly related by J. L. Cathcart who was a principal in Webster Parish at the time:

Arrangements to carry on this work in the community were made. Usually a teacher or the principal went out with the boys so that the work for the day could be followed with other studies pertaining to the project. The terracing engineer would take the boys to a field, show them how to run levels. A team and tools were provided, and terraces were actually built by the boys. An agronomist usually went with the terracing engineer. The newly built terraces were planted with grasses that would bind the soil and hold the terraces until they had become firm.

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid.      <sup>71</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., December 4, 1934.

<sup>72</sup>"Minutes of the Principals' Club, Minden," January 12, 1935.

On another day, the boys were taken out by a specialist in that line of soil conservation to build various kinds of dams. The boys were shown why certain types of dams were constructed in certain types of ditches. Then the boys built the dams.

The soil expert spent the day teaching the various types of soils and the relation of the types of soil to the several ways and means of conserving it. The boys were taken to fields that contained many types of soil, which the boys were taught to classify.

Another type of work was that of planting trees to preserve land. Enough pine seedlings with proper tools to set out an acre of land were supplied. The boys did the work, and learned the reasons for and the lands most profitable for this work. The boys entered into the work in a wholesome manner, and cooperated thoroughly, although some of them had not done work of that nature before. This was a worthy undertaking, and was of practical value to the boys.<sup>73</sup>

## VII. CANNING PROJECT

The philosophy among the members of the Webster Parish School Board was one that exemplified an interest in the schools and communities alike, for anything affecting one would have an effect upon the other. A philosophy of this nature and the interest of Superintendent Richardson in community affairs caused a canning project to be undertaken in 1930 that saved Webster citizens thousands of dollars.<sup>74</sup>

A severe drought during the summer caused practically a total failure in the production of feed crops. Fields of food-stuffs in all parts of the parish produced little or no yield, and a scarcity of food was being faced for the winter months. In late summer and early fall, enough rain fell to give moisture to the production of a number of vegetables such as turnips, beans, and peas. This supply was to be rather

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<sup>73</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 68.



short, because frost would surely destroy the plants in late fall. Every farm had a number of cattle in the pastures and fields that would face almost certain starvation in the winter due to lack of stored feed.<sup>75</sup>

To meet this situation, Superintendent Richardson furnished the direction that united the community schools, the School Board, and a number of other organizations into a common effort. On October 20, 1930, Richardson called the home demonstration agent into conference to study the possibilities of saving the foods then in the fields for winter use. A decision was made to assemble all steam cookers owned by Webster people, and to ask the Police Jury to order a carload of cans to sell to the farmers at cost. Mrs. Julia Cooksey, home demonstration agent for Webster, agreed to supervise the parish-wide operation. Canning plants were set up at every school center in the parish for whites and Negroes. Every effort was made to give all people of the parish an opportunity to preserve all usable food before the frost.<sup>76</sup>

Superintendent Richardson called all the principals into conference and explained the proposed project to them. Cooperation by the principals was evident as they agreed to present the plans to the local community organizations in their respective communities. They also agreed to keep the plans and progress before the children at all times. Richardson secured the cooperation of newspaper editors and they agreed to devote space in their papers to the project.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>E. S. Richardson, "How Webster Parish Met the Drought Emergency," School Life, XVI (April, 1931), 148.

<sup>77</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 69.

E. S. Richardson was the driving force that made a success of the project, for almost daily he sent out circular letters which were written for the public, but addressed to principals, in which he reviewed activities in various communities.<sup>78</sup>

On October 23, 1930, a circular letter from Superintendent Richardson urged the people to hasten for time was short. The letter further related:

. . . . Time is short. Ducks and geese are now flying South. Everyone will have to lend active support now in order to preserve the . . . green foods that are now growing on the face of the earth in Webster . . . . The canning of beeves will be taken up after frost.<sup>79</sup>

Additional canning centers had to be established because the home economics departments soon proved to be too small to handle the large numbers of people wanting to preserve produce. The parish utility man spent many hours directing the establishment of additional centers and transferring needed supplies from center to center.<sup>80</sup>

The Webster Parish School Board bought eleven extra steam cookers for use, and the Negroes bought a pressure cooker for each of the twenty Rosenwald Schools. About one-sixth of the produce canned at the various centers was given to the schools of Webster to feed underprivileged children.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>E. S. Richardson, "Ducks and Geese Are Flying South," The Nation's Schools, VIII (July, 1931), 49-56.

<sup>79</sup>Circular Number 56 (Minden: Webster Parish Public Schools, October 23, 1930).

<sup>80</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>81</sup>E. S. Richardson, "A County School System Meets an Emergency," Journal of the National Education Association, V (May, 1931), 181-183.

Superintendent Richardson believed that the schools had a responsibility to serve the community as well as to educate the boys and girls in the classroom. He felt that there was no way to separate the two when it came to school responsibility.<sup>82</sup>

On December 4, 1930, the news media reported that 161 beeves had been canned to date. The canned meat was worth \$6,500.00 at retail prices of similar products. Thousands of cans of vegetables had been canned, valued at \$2,183.00.<sup>83</sup>

The Shreveport Journal in an editorial on December 12, 1930, reported that 50,000 cans of foodstuffs valued at \$10,000 had been preserved in Webster as the result of the canning project started on October 20, 1930. The editorial stated that the action taken by Richardson would mean a great deal to the people of Webster during the winter ahead and for all time to come.<sup>84</sup>

The canning project closed on December 19, 1930, after thousands of cans of vegetables and meat had been canned. Everyone had entered into the spirit of the project, and it was not unusual to see members of varied professions working side by side in an effort to save the needed food.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>News item in the Minden Herald, December 4, 1930.

<sup>84</sup>Editorial in the Shreveport Journal, December 12, 1930.

<sup>85</sup>E. S. Richardson, "A County School System Meets an Emergency,"  
op. cit.

## VIII. NEGRO EDUCATION

From the time that E. S. Richardson became superintendent of Webster Parish Schools, Negro education was given increased attention by the Board and by citizens of Webster. Prejudices against educating the Negro underwent a gradual change throughout the parish. The Negro schools were housed in improved buildings and provided with better trained teachers. Better teaching equipment was provided and the school term was lengthened as the years passed.<sup>86</sup>

It is believed that the first official recognition given to the poor condition of Negro education in Webster Parish was when the Board acted on Richardson's recommendation that a Parish Training School for colored people be erected immediately.<sup>87</sup> Prior to 1922, education for Negroes in Minden had been provided in a very small building. In 1922 a bond issue was voted in Minden and a part of these funds was used in the construction of the first real Webster Parish Training School for Negroes.<sup>88</sup>

Early in 1922 a Jeanes' Supervisor was appointed to give definite supervision to Negro education in Webster. Upon appointment of this supervisor, Richardson presented a definite plan of Negro education to the Board. Every Negro community that was interested in building a school could take advantage of the plan. The Negroes of a given community could plant ten to fifteen acres of cotton each year on a cooperative basis. The Assistant Demonstration Agent and Jeanes' Supervisor had the responsibility of supervising the projects. All proceeds from the sale of the

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<sup>86</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>87</sup>"Minutes of the Webster Parish School Board, Minden," March 7, 1922.

<sup>88</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 77.

cotton were to be turned over to the School Board and they were to match the money from the general fund of the Board. Arrangements were also made with Rosenwald representatives to secure matching money from that fund.<sup>89</sup>

Six thousand dollars derived from the cotton projects was turned over to the Board in 1925.<sup>90</sup> On July 7, 1925, the Board authorized Superintendent Richardson to look into the matter of constructing Negro schools under the Rosenwald plan as far as funds and donations would allow. Schools were to be constructed at Galilee, New Hope, Valley Springs and Bulah.<sup>91</sup>

After the plan had operated for six years, it was reported in December of 1930 that there were thirty-five Negro schools in Webster Parish. Twenty-five of the schools were Rosenwald buildings and were being operated for a minimum of six months per year.<sup>92</sup> It was the desire of E. S. Richardson to have a Rosenwald school with competent teachers within reach of every Negro child in the parish by 1933.<sup>93</sup>

By 1932, the Webster Parish Training School, which had been established for the purpose of training teachers for rural communities, grew from a small, dilapidated, four-room building into a facility consisting of five

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<sup>89</sup>News item, "Richardson Urges Education for the Negro Population," Shreveport Journal, February 8, 1930.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>"Minutes of the Webster Parish School Board, Minden," July 7, 1925.

<sup>92</sup>Catechism on Webster Parish Schools, op. cit., December, 1930.

<sup>93</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 78.

buildings. The total facility consisted of an administration building, a trades building, a girls' dormitory, a demonstration building and a library. Along with academic training, special emphasis was placed on character development, moral and physical cleanliness, and personal fitness. The philosophy was to train the students for definite community service.<sup>94</sup>

The Negroes were grateful for the considerations shown them toward improving their educational program. A committee of Negro teachers expressed gratitude by letter to the Board on April 5, 1932. The letter read:

. . . . The colored teachers of Webster parish feel that you have done much for us in the past, and more than many parishes of the State under such adverse circumstances. You have not only helped us and our group by encouraging us to build schools, improve our home life, and improve our methods of farming, but Webster parish is a better place in which to live for all its citizens because of your constructive influence and leadership . . . . We therefore, feel that the reduction of salaries is the only safe plan to continue the operation of the parish schools full time. Thus, we graciously accept our share of the burden. . . . We pledge our continued loyalty, faithfulness, and efficient service to you in behalf of the communities in which we serve and the moral, spiritual, and intellectual uplift of Webster Parish.<sup>95</sup>

J. L. Cathcart summarized the administration of Negro schools in Webster Parish by utilizing the following quotation from Clark Foreman's book, Environmental Factors in Negro Elementary Education:

The schools are all administered by the parish superintendent. A Negro Supervisor is employed, however, and to this official most of the responsibility for hiring and discharging teachers is delegated, as well as practically all the other details of the Negro School

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<sup>94</sup>News item, "Parish Training School Celebrates Tenth Anniversary," Signal-Tribune, [Minden], April 27, 1932.

<sup>95</sup>"Minutes of the Webster Parish School Board, Minden," April 5, 1932.

System. Each local community has a school board, which represents its 'School Improvement Association,' composed of the patrons of the school. This, however, is more properly a helping, and not an administrative adjunct.<sup>96</sup>

## IX. SUPERVISION

E. S. Richardson published an article in the 1930 May issue of The Peabody Reflector and Alumni News that summarized his thoughts and attitude toward teaching in Webster Parish as well as elsewhere. His philosophy was expressed as follows:

We have discovered that teaching is a democratic process and that all of it does not take place in the classrooms. We have discovered that every individual is a social being, and is both a teacher and a pupil. We now realize that the first and fundamental prerequisite of a real teacher is the power to start the mental machine going in the other fellow. . . . The first innate quality of a good teacher is to be able to arouse interest, after which the teacher should be able to supply valuable and interesting information, systematically organized, etc. He should be able to create on the part of the pupils a desire and pleasure in solving new problems with vigor and skill, and to instill in their minds right attitudes. . . . It is important that the teacher be able to breathe into the subject matter the breath of life in such a way that the mental machine will start instantly when he appears before the class.<sup>97</sup>

Superintendent Richardson believed that the educational welfare and development of the boys and girls depended upon teachers who were well prepared in academic subjects. He also believed that effectiveness in the classroom depended upon the ability to create desirable attitudes and an ability to meet new situations on the part of the students. The driving force behind the activities of Richardson and the Webster Parish School Board was a desire to care for the educational welfare of each boy

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<sup>96</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 80.

<sup>97</sup>E. S. Richardson, "The employment of Experienced Vs. Non-Experienced Teachers," The Peabody Reflector and Alumni News, Nashville, Tennessee, May, 1930, 20.

and girl in Webster. Immediately after the beginning of the parish-wide plan of education in Webster Parish, the importance of the teachers and the improvement of teaching were recognized as the Board took action to give Richardson sufficient office help so he could devote extra time to visiting and supervising schools. Consideration was given to employing a rural school supervisor, but it was felt by the Board that additional office help would suffice at that time.<sup>98</sup>

The arrangement under which Superintendent Richardson served as superintendent and supervisor lasted until June 5, 1923. At this time Superintendent Richardson suggested certain changes in the office force to provide a more detailed supervisory program. Richardson recommended to the Board that a person be appointed to serve in the capacity of assistant superintendent and as supervisor of schools throughout Webster Parish. The Board unanimously accepted Richardson's recommendation, and Mr. S. R. Emmons was employed to serve in that capacity.<sup>99</sup>

Richardson continued to serve in phases of the supervisory capacity, but he relied upon the newly appointed supervisor to take the major initiative in supervisory matters. A definite program of supervision in all white schools in the parish was initiated with the beginning of the service of S. R. Emmons in 1923.<sup>100</sup>

On July 1, 1924, Miss Helen Woodard was appointed as elementary supervisor to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. Emmons.<sup>101</sup> In

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<sup>98</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., July 5, 1923.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., June 5, 1923.

<sup>100</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 93.

<sup>101</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., July 1, 1930.



1928, her duties in supervision were extended to include all grades in elementary and high school. She remained in this position continuously through the remainder of Superintendent Richardson's administration. The value of the contributions made to the Webster Parish School System by Miss Woodard must be recognized. It was through her efforts and abilities that many of Superintendent Richardson's goals for Webster children were realized.<sup>102</sup>

A supervisory program for the school session 1924-25 was outlined in detail as a phase of the Webster Parish Exhibit at the Louisiana State Fair in Shreveport in 1924. So that the reader might realize the thoroughness of the program it is reproduced here:

Outline of Work Done by Supervisor of Webster Parish

- I General aims for the year
  - A Continue drive for better readers by:
    - 1. Applying remedial measures found needed from study of previous year's work.
    - 2. Using assign-study-test method of recitation in all reading subjects.
    - 3. Making it possible for children to have access to more good, interesting reading matter.
  - B Lay stress on two phases of arithmetic work.
    - 1. Problem solving.
    - 2. Short rapid drills on fundamentals.
- II Special aims
  - A Teachers will be asked to give systematic attention to:
    - 1. Planning their lessons before teaching
    - 2. Teaching pupils how to study
    - 3. Making definite assignments
    - 4. Individual instruction to weak pupils during the "Opportunity Period."
    - 5. Extensive reading by pupils.
- III Testing program for the year
  - A Reading
    - 1. May Ayres Burgess Test

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<sup>102</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 94.

2. Thorndike's Improved Scale for Word Knowledge
3. Gray's Silent Reading (to be used in individual cases for remedial purposes)
- B Arithmetic
  1. Monroe's Standardized Reasoning Tests.
- IV Supervision proper
  - A Classroom visitation
    1. Purpose
      - a. To see just what is being done
      - b. To offer suggestions whereby better results may be accomplished
      - c. To see and test results
    2. Frequency
      - a. At least once every six weeks, usually every four weeks
      - b. Special visits are often made
    3. Time given to one visit
      - a. Depends on supervisor's purpose, teacher being visited, and location of school. Thought usually 20 to 60 minutes.
  - B Departmental meetings
    1. Groups
      - a. Primary, including teachers of grades 1-3, inclusive
      - b. Intermediate, including grades 4-7, inclusive
    2. Brief description
      - a. Five meetings each during the year; meet on Saturday afternoons at central place, Minden High School; special programs planned by Supervisor and Group Leader; needs and requests of teachers determining nature of each program; at least one lesson given at each meeting; teachers feel that meetings are theirs.
  - C Letters
    1. Circular
      - a. Giving definite information as to methods, subject matter, expectations, regulations, and information of various kinds.
    2. Personal
      - a. Giving suggestions, helps, and requests of various kinds regarding work.
  - D Professional library
    1. In charge of supervisor
    2. Most teachers have read as many as five books, some more, during year.

3. Reading in most cases voluntary with suggestions as to what to read. In some cases, definite assignments are made due to special needs or interests of teachers.
  4. In every group meeting, teachers made reports as to opinions and suggestions of different authors or subject being discussed at this particular meeting.
- E Demonstration teaching
1. Use
    - a. To illustrate new or different methods
    - b. To become familiar with pupils and to check teacher's work
- F Miscellaneous
1. Conference with teachers following observation
  2. Aid teachers in devising ways and means of getting library books and supplementary readers
  3. Put on special drive for Reading Certificates.<sup>103</sup>

The harmony that existed between the principals and supervisor as they worked toward common goals indicated the vitality of the overall school program administered by Superintendent Richardson. The wholesome spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding that existed among the teachers toward the supervisor was a further indication of the solidness with which Webster School System was being administered.<sup>104</sup>

It was not meant that supervision should end with the regular visit from the parish supervisor. Superintendent Richardson insisted that at least two periods each day be spent in supervision by each principal in the parish.<sup>105</sup>

Due to Richardson's ability to interpret the needs of the supervisory program to a layman Board, the School Board cooperated with all phases of

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<sup>103</sup>From files of the Webster Parish School Board, Minden.

<sup>104</sup>J. L. Cathcart, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

<sup>105</sup>E. S. Richardson, "How the County Unit System Enables the Board to Save Money," The Nation's Schools, III (April, 1929), 30.

the supervisory program. The Board granted leaves for administrators to attend conferences on supervision and paid part or all expenses in many cases.<sup>106</sup>

In the summer of 1928 Superintendent Richardson attended classes in secondary supervision taught by Dr. C. W. Knudsen at George Peabody College. He was impressed with Dr. Knudsen's practical ideas to the extent that upon his return to Webster Parish a detailed presentation was made to the School Board. Richardson also recommended that the Board invite Dr. Knudsen to visit Webster and make a complete survey of existing conditions in the high schools of the parish. His major desire was to receive suggestions for improving Webster schools. The Board was enthusiastic toward the plan, and endorsed it wholeheartedly. Dr. Knudsen accepted the invitation with the objective of improving the instruction by all teachers in the parish.<sup>107</sup>

Dr. Knudsen met with the teachers and parish officials in Minden on October 15, 1928, to outline the program and take preliminary steps to initiate it. A week was spent in the parish putting the plan into operation. Dr. Knudsen returned for a week in January of the same school year to check on the progress of the program in general. Another week was spent in the parish late in the spring of the same year. It was concluded that the program of supervision initiated by Dr. Knudsen in Webster had been tremendously successful.<sup>108</sup> During the summer of 1929, Superintendent

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<sup>106</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 98.

<sup>107</sup>J. E. Harper, "The Webster Parish Survey," Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association, VI (January, 1929), 19-22.

<sup>108</sup>C. W. Knudsen, "Inaugurating a Program of Supervision in the High School." On file in Webster Parish School Board office, April 29, 1929, pp. 7-8.

Richardson, with the principals of Webster and several teachers, enrolled in George Peabody College for further study of supervision under Dr. Knudsen.<sup>109</sup>

The importance of supervision had been placed in its proper perspective in Webster Parish under the superintendency of E. S. Richardson. During a Board meeting on January 1, 1935, a Board member stated that supervision was the most important balance wheel in the organized parish unit. Another member stated that he felt that no better returns for money spent could be expected by the Board than compensations received on money invested in supervision.<sup>110</sup>

In the fall of 1932, Dr. L. V. Cavins, Director of Research for the Department of Education, Charleston, West Virginia, visited the Webster Parish School System. He devoted considerable time to the supervisory phase of the Webster educational program. On February 23, 1933, a news article appeared in the Shreveport Journal that gave some pertinent statements made by Dr. Cavins about the work of the Webster supervisor:

I soon learned from the nature of her activities that she is more likely to be found in one of the ten school buildings than in her office. . . . She explained that her work was largely concerned with working directly with principals and teachers, and especially with young and inexperienced teachers. . . . She drew from her records the results of standard achievement tests that were given periodically to every pupil in the county. These were in excellent form--classified to show the standing in the major school subjects of every grade in each of the ten schools. . . . pointing out where the pupils in a given grade in a given school had fallen considerably below the same grade in other schools. She had observed this teacher, pointed out how she could improve her methods, even provided a substitute for her, and took her to observe a teacher who had been eminently successful with the same grade of pupils in teaching the same subjects. . . . I left her feeling that she was safe-guarding the

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<sup>109</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 107.

<sup>110</sup>"Minutes", op. cit., January 1, 1935.

educational opportunity of every pupil in the parish.<sup>111</sup>

## X. GUIDANCE

In the summer of 1935, some of the principals from Webster Parish enrolled in a guidance course taught by Dr. H. I. Garrett at Louisiana State University. The principals in attendance become convinced that they were missing an opportunity to better serve the boys and girls of Webster Parish, and related their feelings to Superintendent Richardson upon their return to Webster. Richardson became extremely enthusiastic over the possibilities of a guidance study to determine avenues of approach. Being a person of ideas and enthusiasm, Richardson presented the matter to the Board, and was authorized to negotiate with Louisiana State University for a practical field course in guidance for high school teachers. The Board was agreeable to defraying all expenses and expected all teachers to cooperate.<sup>112</sup>

On October 12, 1935, Dr. Garrett met with the teachers and outlined plans for the study. Compiled results of questionnaires given to each high school pupil as well as their parents would be on the basis of the study. Teachers were asked to compose questionnaires; a final committee would study these questionnaires and devise one for use over the parish. A committee compiled questionnaire results, and made every attempt to analyze them in view of the surveys made of various occupations in each community.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup>News item in the Shreveport Journal, February 23, 1933.

<sup>112</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 111.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

Grades seven through eleven in the various high schools were organized into home-room groups for the purpose of studying the numerous phases of guidance with considerable emphasis on vocations.<sup>114</sup>

A Senior Day was organized to take place in the spring of 1936. Speakers were selected with emphasis upon senior vocational choices. The first part of the day's activity consisted of a general assembly for the purpose of entertainment and orientation. After this the seniors were divided into smaller groups according to vocational interests. A person of experiential background was provided to speak to each special interest group. The speakers proved to be enthusiastic and highly interested in having a part in providing for the interests needs of Webster seniors.<sup>115</sup>

## XI. LIBRARY SERVICE

E. S. Richardson had long favored better library facilities. He had recommended financial support from the School Board on a number of occasions and appropriations were usually made. On November 2, 1925, the Board made it possible for schools to purchase library books on a 75-25 per cent basis.<sup>116</sup> Seventy-five per cent of a given expenditure was to be paid by the local school with the Board assuming the balance. This added a certain amount of incentive for improvement of libraries in the various high schools.

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<sup>114</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>116</sup>"Minutes of the Webster Parish School Board, Minden," November 3, 1925.

On February 16, 1926, a direct grant of thirty dollars for each high school was allotted for the purchase of library books. Superintendent Richardson was highly interested in improved libraries, but funds seemed to be a major handicap especially for providing for all the people of the parish.<sup>117</sup>

Civic and social clubs of Minden had advocated a library for the city for several years prior to 1929. Superintendent Richardson and the Board took the position that the Board could not contribute to a program of this nature unless provisions were made for equal educational advantages to all the children in the parish.<sup>118</sup> The possibilities of money from the Rosenwald Fund gave the idea of a parish library a possible reality.

It was a recommendation from Miss Essae M. Culver, Executive Secretary of the Louisiana Library Commission, on April 11, 1929, that set the wheels of progress in motion. The recommendation was forwarded to Mr. Clark Foreman, who represented the Julius Rosenwald Fund. The recommendation asked that Webster Parish be considered for the establishment of a parish-wide library to serve both races. Miss Culver assured Mr. Foreman that favorable consideration would be appreciated, and that the Louisiana Library Commission would give general supervision from the start, and would make an indefinite loan of 1000 volumes ready for circulation.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup>Ibid., February 16, 1926.

<sup>118</sup>E. S. Richardson, "Library Service As It Functions in Webster Parish," Address delivered at American Library Association Meeting at New Orleans, April 25-30, 1932.

<sup>119</sup>Letter from Essae M. Culver to Clark Foreman, April 11, 1929.



After a thorough investigation by Mr. Foreman, he was convinced that the conditions set up by the Rosenwald Fund could be met by the authorities of Webster Parish. Appropriations from the Rosenwald Fund were on a matching basis the first two years, one dollar for two on the third and fourth years, and one dollar for three dollars from local sources during the fifth and last year of the demonstration.<sup>120</sup>

Superintendent Richardson served on the first Webster Library Board of Control. Other members serving with him were Mrs. R. A. Baker, Mrs. D. W. Stewart, Jr., R. L. Ensey, and Marshal Pearce. Mayor H. L. Bridges and H. J. Heflin were ex-officio members. The new board elected Miss Mary Walton Harris, formerly of the Louisiana Library Commission, as parish librarian.<sup>121</sup>

An interesting feature of the Webster Parish Library was the book truck, bearing the slogan, "Books--Service--Free to All," which was used to distribute books from the headquarters library in Minden to the branches in every community in the parish. The central library was located in a rented store building in the heart of Minden and from here the books were sent all over the parish in an attempt to serve the many people who wished to enjoy library resources.<sup>122</sup>

The Webster Parish School Board made regular appropriations along with the Police Jury and other parish agencies to make the new library

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<sup>120</sup>Essae Mae Culver, "Webster Parish Schools," Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association, VII (October, 1929), 24.

<sup>121</sup>J. L. Cathcart, op. cit., p. 132.

<sup>122</sup>Essae M. Culver, op. cit.

program a financial success. Superintendent Richardson cooperated with the new parish institution to the extent of hiring two full time high school librarians and nine teacher librarians who worked under the direction of Miss Harris. This cooperation saved much duplication of materials and opened the resources of the reference and information collections of the headquarters library to the various high schools.<sup>123</sup>

Cooperation extended by the Webster Parish School Board allowed a larger circulation than otherwise would have been possible. By placing the branch libraries in the schools, aid in addition to annual contributions by the Board was obtained, in the form of library quarters, equipment, and utilities. Teacher librarians served the students during school hours, and the community after school. During the summer, all branch libraries were usually moved from the schools to stores or rooms located in the towns or communities.<sup>124</sup>

On January 1, 1935, the president of the Webster Parish School Board stated that the library program in Webster presented the model situation.<sup>125</sup> Further insight into the success of the Webster library program was given in a book written by Margaret Dixon and Nantelle Gittinger. Statements were as follows:

It was in 1929 that Louisiana's fourth library demonstration was conducted. This was in Webster Parish and proved quite the most ambitious undertaking of the

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<sup>123</sup>Ibid.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>125</sup>"Minutes," op. cit., January 1, 1935.

State Library to date. . . . It was an instant and complete success. In the first eight months of the demonstration period, the circulation reached 88,778. Negroes as well as whites were enthusiastic. The Webster Library has never faltered. It is still going strong.<sup>126</sup>

## XII. TRIBUTE TO A. D. TURNER

On December 5, 1932, an appreciation dinner honoring Mr. A. D. Turner was held in the home of Miss Helen Woodard, supervisor of Webster Parish Schools. Mr. Turner was an outgoing Board member who had served efficiently and faithfully as vice president of the Board for a period of ten years. Board members and school officials gathered to pay tribute to Mr. Turner's faithful and unselfish service. A Gladstone bag, purchased by the group was presented during this gathering. Following the dinner, various members of the group gave testimonials in behalf of Mr. Turner.<sup>127</sup>

Superintendent E. S. Richardson stated that the fundamental reason for the high standards attained by Webster schools was due entirely to intelligent cooperation of the group then present. Every person in the system had found his place and served well. Richardson further related:

We have no school stars. During the past twelve years there have been only two negative votes cast in board meetings. While the personnel of the board has changed somewhat there has been no division of any consequence. I think the reason for this solidarity is that the board has always kept uppermost in mind the welfare of the children of the parish. It is true we have had difficulties and division threatened at times, but through intelligent, frank and honest cooperation

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<sup>126</sup>Margaret Dixon and Nantelle Gittinger. The First Twenty-Five Years of the Louisiana State Library, 1925-1950. Baton Rouge, p. 12.

<sup>127</sup>"Honoring Mr. A. D. Turner," from scrapbook of E. S. Richardson, December 5, 1932.

satisfactory settlements have always been reached. Mr. Turner, the man we are honoring tonight has been a member of the unselfish group since 1922. . . . As I said in the beginning Webster's School organization is like unto a well-trained football team without stars, but every person, both white and colored, has his place. We have all learned that equal honor and glory are due both the person who runs the interference and to the person who carries the ball. Without such an organization, your superintendent would be helpless and Webster's schools would never have made a touchdown.<sup>128</sup>

All board members and principals alike had many things to say of an outstanding nature about Mr. Turner. A cooperative spirit was reflected in all speeches made by various members of the attending group.

#### XIII. A SALARY RAISE FOR RICHARDSON

During the early days of July, 1925, the Webster Parish School Board at a called meeting raised the salary of E. S. Richardson from \$4,000.00 to \$5,000.00. Richardson had been tendered a position in another state at a considerable increase in salary with an opportunity of still greater increases. He had served Webster well for five years. At the called meeting the Board recognized the outstanding qualifications of Professor Richardson and because of the great interest he had taken in educational development and the valuable service rendered to the schools through his untiring efforts, the Board desired to show an appreciation of the work he had done. During the Board meeting a great deal of time was spent reviewing accomplishments of Webster Parish School System under the superintendency of E. S. Richardson.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup>Ibid.

<sup>129</sup>News item in the Signal-Tribune [Minden] , July 6, 1925.

Under Richardson's administration there had been notable increase in enrollment due to increased holding power of the schools. This holding power had been made possible by changing the structure from thirty-nine small schools to ten high schools located in key places so that the boys and girls of Webster could receive an education. Provisions had been made for transporting the students in forty-five school trucks. National recognition had already been gained from fair exhibits portraying the Webster system. A utility service had been installed, thus giving schools of Webster a much needed service.<sup>130</sup>

Voicing the Board's appreciation for the work done by Richardson and in an effort to hold him as Webster's superintendent, the following resolution was passed:

Whereas, E. S. Richardson, the present incumbent who has been Superintendent of Webster Parish Schools for the past five years, has been tendered a position in another state at a considerable increase in salary with an opportunity of still greater increase.

Whereas, during his administration the schools of Webster Parish have made phenomenal strides and advancements along all educational lines, both from supervisory and administrative standpoints. A wholesome school sentiment prevails throughout the parish and an era of good feeling exists between country and town due largely to the consolidation of schools.

Whereas, the schools of Webster parish, under his leadership, have not only made a profound impression on the people of our state but have won national fame as being the best organized system in the state and perhaps in the nation, same being evidenced by numerous letters received from all sections of the United States.

Whereas, During his administration the parish board has constructed more than one-half million dollars worth of school buildings. These buildings are monuments to his administration from the standpoints of economy, durability and arrangement.

Whereas, during his administration the board has erected and operated a parish wide school book and supply store, the first of its kind in the state, where hundreds of dollars are

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<sup>130</sup>Ibid.

being saved annually to the taxpayers and signal service is being rendered to every school in the parish, notwithstanding the remoteness of its location.

Whereas, During his administration, Webster parish has enjoyed the distinction of having the best organized system of auto transportation in the state, giving every child in the parish high school opportunities. It was through his direction and initiative that was planned and built the famous Webster parish school exhibit which won four places out of a possible six at the Louisiana State Fair, and has since been exhibited in several states of the Union and has been seen by thousands of interested spectators at state and national educational meetings. It is now on exhibition at the State Normal School.

Whereas, This board expends annually more than \$300,000 which expenditure demands the highest type of business ability in handling economically this amount of money.

Whereas, The value of this type of leadership in educational administration can hardly be measured in dollars and cents.

Therefore be it Resolved, That the parish school board meet this increase in salary by increasing his salary from four to five thousand dollars so that he may continue to direct the educational program for this parish.<sup>131</sup>

Editorially the Shreveport Journal praised the action taken by the Webster Parish School Board, stating that the Board had exercised good judgement in meeting an offer from an adjoining state. The closing remarks of this editorial were:

. . . . the money paid in salary to such a servant as E. S. Richardson is small when compared to the public benefits resulting from his efforts. . . .<sup>132</sup>

For several days following the action of the Webster Parish School Board, letters were received from prominent educators all over the state complimenting the Board for the action they had taken. T. H. Harris, State Superintendent of Education, wrote from Baton Rouge stating that Richardson had demonstrated unusual ability, initiative and efficiency in his work as Superintendent of the public schools in Webster Parish. He

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<sup>131</sup>Ibid.

<sup>132</sup>Editorial in the Shreveport Journal, July 18, 1925.

further stated that it was impossible for the services of an able and efficient official to be measured adequately in terms of salary, but that it was entirely proper for the public to reward in a reasonably adequately manner, an able, conscientious and efficient public servant by giving him a salary somewhat commensurate with his services. Closing his letter to the Board, Harris said:

. . . . My feeling is that Webster Parish has as its Superintendent one of the really strong men of the country, and I am very much delighted to learn that the Board appreciates his services and is determined to retain them by paying him a fair salary.<sup>133</sup>

C. A. Ives, Dean of the Teachers' College at Louisiana State University, concluded a similar letter with this statement:

Competent judges will say that Superintendent Richardson has been worth to Webster Parish many times the salary paid and that the school board is but doing a good piece of business in insuring a continuance of her school progress.<sup>134</sup>

G. O. Houston, President of Louisiana Teachers Association, wrote that it would not be possible to hold a man like Mr. Richardson unless the public was willing to pay a satisfactory price for his service. Houston closed his letter by giving due credit to the Board for their many progressive moves. He stated:

. . . I think your good board has a habit of doing the right thing in a big way and we cannot commend your many good works too highly.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup>Letter from T. H. Harris to W. G. Stewart, President of Webster Parish School Board, July 21, 1925.

<sup>134</sup>Letter from C. A. Ives to W. G. Stewart, July 23, 1925.

<sup>135</sup>Letter from G. O. Houston to W. G. Stewart, July 27, 1925.

Immediately following the salary raise by the Webster Parish School Board, a citizen of Webster Parish entered suit to annul the action of the School Board and prevent the payment of the increased salary. The suit was based on Act 120 of the 1916 session of the Legislature, limiting salaries of parish superintendents to \$4,000.00. In the local court, presided over by Honorable J. S. Richardson, the case was decided in favor of the plaintiff. The School Board appealed the case to the State Supreme Court.<sup>136</sup>

On Monday, July 11, 1927, the Supreme Court rendered a decision reversing the action of the lower court and declared that the action of the School Board was legal in raising E. S. Richardson's salary to \$5,000.00. The decision stated:

Our conclusion is that the provision limiting the salaries of parish superintendents of education, as contained in Act 120 of 1916, was repealed or superseded by Act 100 of 1922, and that the authority to fix the salaries of such superintendents is vested in the parish board of school directors. For the reason assigned, the judgement appealed from is reversed and the demand of the plaintiff is rejected at his costs.<sup>137</sup>

The decision of the Supreme Court in the salary case was of more than local importance because it applied to the state as a whole, and not only protected five or six other superintendents whose salaries had been raised beyond the old limit of \$4,000.00, but also made it possible for school boards to exercise their own judgement in securing the services of the best qualified superintendents, and pay them salaries commensurate with their services.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup>Editorial in the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association, September 1927.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid.



The Court, in rendering its decision, complimented Mr. Richardson as follows:

The present superintendent had served as such for several years at the salary of \$4,000 per annum, and under his efficient administration, the educational interest of the parish had been aroused and had made notable advancement along all lines.<sup>139</sup>

#### XIV. LOUISIANA SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS VISIT WEBSTER

On January 26-28, 1927, the Annual Meeting of Louisiana School Officials met in Minden to study the operation of the Webster Parish (County) Unit of school administration. T. H. Harris, State Superintendent of Education, had selected Webster as a model for the Parish Unit of Administration.<sup>140</sup>

A special bulletin was prepared by E. S. Richardson and his staff for the purpose of furnishing a guide to the school officials to aid them in their study of the methods and results of a planned effort to develop a school system for Webster Parish, based upon the principle that all the children of school age should be given equal and adequate education advantages. The twenty-two page bulletin described every facet of the Webster School System. It contained pictures of all the high schools of the parish with detailed descriptions of construction, transportation, teacher certification, curriculum, and numerous other points of information.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup>Ibid.

<sup>140</sup>News item in the Signal-Tribune [Minden] , January 27, 1927.

<sup>141</sup>Bulletin. The Operation of the Webster Parish Unit of School Administration from 1921 to 1927, Minden, January 26-28, 1927.

Twenty-five hundred copies of the bulletin were published and sent out to school officials throughout the United States. The Signal-Tribune of Minden commented editorially that:

. . . .the benefits to be derived from this splendid booklet cannot be told in words. It is a book to be proud of, and the Signal wishes to extend its congratulations to the Webster Parish School Board on this accomplishment.<sup>142</sup>

The last page of the special bulletin was entitled, "The Final Outcome." It stated that considerable benefits had been derived from Webster's "equal educational opportunity" in addition to giving the children of the parish better facilities. The program inaugurated in 1929 had so crystalized the sentiment of all the people of the parish that all corporation, ward, and district lines had been obliterated, so far as dividing the town from the country. The final page further related the following:

. . . . The banker and the merchant have become friends of the farmer and the dairyman because of the friendship that has grown up among their children who attend the same school, play in the same games, receive the same type of instruction from the same teacher, and finally graduate in the same class. There is no longer in Webster the town boy and the country girl; they are classmates and friends. No prejudice and hatred now exist between communities; the people in the poorer sections feel that they are getting a square deal, and the citizens of the wealthier centers think it good business to educate all the children of all the people.<sup>143</sup>

Two hundred educators attended the three day conference in Webster Parish. The Webster Signal on January 27, 1927 presented a large picture of Superintendent E. S. Richardson and four other outstanding educators on the front page of the conference edition. Pictured with Richardson were

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<sup>142</sup> Editorial in the Signal-Tribune [Minden] , January 20, 1925.

<sup>143</sup> Bulletin, op. cit.

V. L. Roy, President of Louisiana Normal College; E. W. Jones, Superintendent of Caddo Parish Schools; John S. Patton, Superintendent of Claiborne Parish Schools; and C. B. Turner, Supervising Principal of Baton Rouge Schools and President of the State Teachers Association. The news article accompanying this picture was headed, "Minden in Gala Attire to Welcome Her Distinguished Visitors."<sup>144</sup>

In another parish paper, Superintendent Richardson's picture was published under headlines reading "WEBSTER'S GREATEST POSSESSION--HER TEN BEAUTIFUL HIGH SCHOOLS."<sup>145</sup> In the same edition pictures of the ten schools were included, with statistical summaries about each.

In a special tribute to E. S. Richardson the Signal-Tribune quoted Bismarck in the opening lines--"The Nation that has the schools has the future." Then, with relation to the situation in Webster, the article gave the following thoughts:

Worth more than all the gold in the world, more than all the wealth of men, is the possession of knowledge. Here in Webster Parish, there are ten beautiful Temples of Learning, which is the greatest possession this parish lays claim to. . . . Is it necessary to say that Webster Parish is proud of its schools? We are more than that; we are appreciative of the man who is the power behind the throne, and to whose efforts largely the excellent school system of Webster Parish is what it is today!<sup>146</sup>

Superintendent Richardson never failed to give credit to the important part played by the press in bringing school progress into true reality. In a special interview with a reporter for the Signal-Tribune, Richardson declared that progress could not have been made without the excellent

<sup>144</sup>News item in the Webster Signal [Minden] , January 27, 1927.

<sup>145</sup>News item in the Signal-Tribune [Minden] , January 27, 1927.

<sup>146</sup>Editorial in the Signal-Tribune [Minden] , January 27, 1927.

cooperation received from local parish papers. He gave the local press credit for placing before the public the policies of the School Board as well as publicizing school activities to a maximum. To further illustrate his feelings toward wide publicity he said:

. . . . Lighting a candle and placing it under a bushel, was condemned as a foolish proceeding two thousand years ago and to fail in securing the sympathetic influence and the publicity of the parish papers is to be the same awkward position as the one who lights the candle and then loses the effulgence of its light by placing it under cover.<sup>147</sup>

As the interview was closed he called the two parish newspapers "beacon lights", spreading the light of school news to the folks at home.

The group of educators from all over the state spent three days in the Webster Parish School System visiting the various high schools by school bus. They were divided into groups, each group going to different schools on scheduled visits. An attempt was made to give everyone an opportunity to visit every high school in Webster.<sup>148</sup>

The most significant feature of the conference was a program and banquet held in Minden. The program was presided over by Mr. C. O. Holland, a vigorous young man of Minden. The principal speakers of the banquet were Mr. J. B. Snell, President of the School Board, and Mr. Nelson, President of the Police Jury. Mr. Snell explained that the parish school officials operated upon a plan that recognized the parish superintendent as the paid executive and the secretary-manager of the Board, who, because of his technical knowledge and qualities of leadership, was the man to direct the educational affairs of the parish. The duties of the members of the Board,

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<sup>147</sup>News item in the Signal-Tribune [Minden] , January 27, 1927.

<sup>148</sup>Editorial in the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association, March, 1927, pp. 19-26.

according to Mr. Snell, were to consult with the superintendent in his efforts to carry forward a carefully planned educational program. Mr. Nelson explained how the Police Jury cooperated with the School Board in locating and building public highways and public schools. He also showed that the support of public education was a good business investment.<sup>149</sup>

As each participant arrived at the conference and registered, the following letter of welcome was given him:

Jan. 26, 1927

TO OUR SCHOOL GUESTS-  
Gentlemen:

It is our earnest desire to make your visit to Webster both profitable and pleasant. Our people are proud of their schools not because of any very expensive physical accommodations either in the way of building or equipment, nor because of any superior teaching force, but because of the uniformity of opportunities offered.

This parish was selected by Mr. Harris for the purpose of studying the operation of the county unit of school administration and not because of superiority of school plants or teaching corps. We do claim, however, that we have proceeded along a definite program and have endeavored with our limited means to give all the children of the parish the same opportunity.

We hope, in your study of our schools, that you will judge them from the standpoint of uniformity rather than from the standpoint of individual superiority.

Cordially yours,  
J. B. Snell, President  
E. S. Richardson, Supt.<sup>150</sup>

The success of the conference was evidenced by editorial reactions in the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association. The editorial stated that if all the parishes could follow the example of Webster Parish and organize their systems on a parish-wide basis and convert the taxpayers to the idea that all the children in such a unit should have equal school advantages, then the task of securing additional state aid would be much

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<sup>149</sup>Ibid.

<sup>150</sup>Letter from J. B. Snell and E. S. Richardson to each conference guest, January 26, 1927.

easier. There could be very little hope for a substantial enlargement of the state school funds until practically all parishes followed Webster's example.<sup>151</sup>

#### XV. SCHOOL TRANSFERS PICK UP FARM PRODUCTS

In 1927 the dairy farmers of Webster Parish were producing good milk and cream, but many of them were in such isolated parts of the parish that it was impossible for the creamery wagons to pick up their products. The farmers were becoming discouraged and the industry was lagging.<sup>152</sup>

W. A. Givens, the parish agricultural agent, and E. S. Richardson got their heads together and originated the idea of putting a rack to carry the cans on the rear of the fifty-two buses being used to transport the farm boys and girls to school. All the schools were on the routes of the creamery wagons, and the whole matter was settled.<sup>153</sup>

During the spring of 1927, the Webster Parish School Board passed a resolution providing for the transportation of milk, cream, eggs, and other farm products to the convenient markets by means of school transfers. This action made it possible for the Givens-Richardson plan to be put into action.<sup>154</sup>

Soon after the Parish School Board took official action, the Shreveport Journal printed an editorial under the head, "Something New But Sane":

<sup>151</sup>Editorial in the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association, March, 1927, pp. 19-26.

<sup>152</sup>News item in the Horse Show News [Pine Bluff, Arkansas], November, 1927.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid.

<sup>154</sup>Editorial in the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association, November, 1927, p. 28.

The Webster Parish School Board, at its last meeting, adopted a resolution that will, perhaps, as a result, ultimately change the present one-crop system of farming, with a one-pay-day-a-year program, to a parish-wide butter-fat or sour cream production system of agriculture, with every day a pay day to the farmers . . . . Webster Parish is a leader in the matter of organized schools. Why not lead in the matter of cream production? Why not increase the number of pay days for farmers, and in so doing increase soil fertility? They are questions that leaders in the new movement may well propound. They are determined to answer them by their activities, just as Webster's program for organized schools, an outstanding educational accomplishment, has been developed.<sup>155</sup>

The plan operated by having the cans of milk and cream picked up at the regular stops for school children. At specified points the cans were deposited in a place to be gathered up by the creamery trucks.

The boys and girls thought it was fun, the farmers thought it was fine, and the school bus didn't mind at all. The buses used very little more gasoline and the creameries received more cream, thus placing more money in the farmers' pockets and everybody was happy.<sup>156</sup>

During the school year 1927-28, one of the buses carried thirty-two students and eight farmers to Baton Rouge to attend a University short course. Needless to say, the group was the center of attraction, for on the side of the bus was a sign that read, "Delivering the Cream of the Land and the Cream from the Cow--Webster Parish, Louisiana."<sup>157</sup>

Was the new plan a success? If raising the monthly milk checks of the farmers from \$125.00 a month to more than \$2,000.00 a month was any measure, it was a booming success.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup>Editorial in the Shreveport Journal, May 2, 1927.

<sup>156</sup>News item in the Horse Show News, op. cit.

<sup>157</sup>Ibid.      <sup>158</sup>Ibid.

## XVI. AN OUTSTANDING CHARACTER

In 1930, Dr. Luther Longino penned in his book, Thoughts, Visions and Sketches of North Louisiana, that if he were called upon to point out the most outstanding character in Minden, it would unquestionably have been the Superintendent of Public Education of Webster Parish.<sup>159</sup> E. S. Richardson was so closely interwoven with the parish school system that it was impossible to speak of one without mentioning the other. Longino further recalled that two beautiful public school buildings had been erected on the site of the old Female College of Minden and that the twenty-three acre campus had undergone considerable improvement and change. On the north side, and west of the campus ran a winding branch dividing evenly a low, narrow, marshy valley lying between surrounding hills. This valley would overflow during heavy rains and afforded a place for mosquitoes to breed. The land was badly needed for future development of school property. Superintendent Richardson conceived the plan of converting this strip of land into playgrounds and a ball park for the use of pupils of the Minden schools. The idea was endorsed and approved by the School Board. It was a bold undertaking and took a great amount of courage to carry through. The work was observed from week to week and the skeptical had many misgivings as the project neared completion into an area of order and beauty.

Longino devoted much attention to the accomplishments of Richardson as Webster's educational leader. He viewed Mr. Richardson as:

A democrat of the democrats, and his desire for the welfare of the children of his parish led him away from the

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<sup>159</sup>Luther Longino, M.D., Thoughts, Visions and Sketches of North Louisiana, 1930, pp. 282-283.



narrow and provincial dogmas of the day into a broader and more liberal application of its principles, seeking equal opportunities for the boy or girl, no matter where he lives, or how cruel destiny may have been in their lives.<sup>160</sup>

#### XVII. ADVICE TO A FRIEND

In January 1935, J. A. Shelby was elected superintendent of the Bienville Parish School System. This was the parish that Professor Richardson had served twenty-five years earlier. As a new superintendent Mr. Shelby sought the advice of the Professor immediately after being elected to the position. Richardson, concluding his remarks to Shelby said, "Aubrey, I've known you a long time. As a new superintendent, I would encourage you to stick to what you think is right. It may cut you to the quick sometimes, but if you consider what is best for the boys and girls, you will come out on top. Don't compromise when you think you are right."<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Interview with J. A. Shelby, superintendent of Bienville Parish School System, January 26, 1965.

## CHAPTER V

### EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON A WIDER SCALE

(1921-1936)

Edwin Sanders Richardson, as superintendent of Webster Parish School System, not only worked at the local level, but worked tirelessly throughout Louisiana to improve the educational opportunities of boys and girls. His efforts on the statewide basis were exerted through school officials' conferences, the Louisiana Teachers Association, and numerous speaking engagements.

Soon after he became superintendent in Webster Parish, all teachers joined their state organization and remained in this role throughout his superintendency.<sup>1</sup> He served as a member of the House of Delegates to Louisiana Teachers Association as early as the November 1923 convention. Others serving from Webster Parish were C. L. Coussans, Miss Effie Lee McAdams, D. D. Christian and Mrs. J. D. Mims.<sup>2</sup>

He also served as chairman of the Resolutions Committee at the 1923 convention along with committee members A. E. Phillips, V. L. Roy, Mattie Mae English and Letitia Kinabrew. Resolutions presented to the convention for adoption requested that attention of the people of Louisiana be directed toward the advancement of public education throughout Louisiana.

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<sup>1</sup>Reported in the Journal of Louisiana Teachers Association, 1922-1936.

<sup>2</sup>News item in the Journal of Louisiana Teachers Association, (January, 1924), 3.

A specific resolution requested that all friends and supporters of public education in Louisiana endorse the proposed additional state tax of one mill in aid of the public schools and that beginning on January 1, 1925, the proceeds of the severance tax be appropriated in support of the public schools and for expanding teacher training facilities of Louisiana.

During the annual conference of state and parish school officials held in New Orleans on January 24-25, 1924, E. S. Richardson served on a panel of superintendents with G. C. Reeves of Sabine, W. B. Prescott of St. Landry, E. W. Jones of Caddo, W. S. Lafargue of Lafourche, and F. K. White of Calcasieu. The panel had the responsibility of discussing specific local problems in administering schools in various parishes of the state. The broad topic which the superintendents' panel discussed was "School Plants and Equipment."<sup>3</sup>

Dean C. A. Ives of Teachers' College, Louisiana State University, invited superintendents of the state to meet in Baton Rouge during the week of July 7-11, 1924. The program consisted of discussions upon topics of vital importance to the successful operation of the schools during the next session. After each topic was presented by two appointed leaders, a round table discussion would follow. On the last day of the meeting, Superintendent Richardson and G. C. Reeves analyzed the consolidation of country schools and the transportation of children in their respective parishes. Richardson pointed out that consolidation had been effected in Webster Parish and that transportation routes had been planned in such a way as to place high school facilities within reach of all children who wished to avail themselves of a high school education. The general opinion of the group

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<sup>3</sup>News item in the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association, March, 1924, p. 10.

involved in the round table discussion indicated that every effort should be expended to strengthen transportation provisions for all children so that consolidation could move forward in Louisiana. A movement in any other direction would be a detriment to equal educational opportunities for all students. Another matter of importance which developed during the discussion was the feeling that all children should be transported in transfers authorized by the School Board and that private conveyances operated at public expense should not be permitted except in unusual cases.<sup>4</sup>

During the annual meeting of the Louisiana Teachers Association in November 1924, a School Publicity Committee was appointed, with E. S. Richardson representing the Fourth Congressional District. On March 7, 1925, the first meeting was held in Baton Rouge and Richardson was in attendance. Each member of the committee stated his views concerning the nature and scope of the publicity work that the committee should attempt. The group adopted a slogan with the understanding that it would be used throughout the publicity campaign. The slogan "Equal Educational Opportunities for All the Children and Equal Local Tax Rates for School Support," reflected the philosophy already in existence in the Webster Parish school system. The committee made detailed plans for the purpose of making the new slogan a reality in Louisiana schools.<sup>5</sup>

A second meeting of the State Publicity Committee was held in April

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<sup>4</sup>News item in the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association (September, 1924), 7.

<sup>5</sup>News item in the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association, (April, 1925) 63-64.

1925, at which A. L. Pourciau, Nicholas Bauer, W. S. Lafargue, E. S. Richardson, T. W. Shields, J. H. Bres, F. K. White, and W. J. Avery met with President G. O. Houston to put the final touches to the plan. Houston stated:

School publicity is the most important project ever undertaken by the Louisiana Teachers Association, and if the entire teaching force of the state can be enlisted in the campaign that has been so well organized, and so auspiciously started, incalculable benefits to the cause of education in the state will be the result.<sup>6</sup>

The general feeling of the Publicity Committee on which Richardson served was that the educational profession had an obligation to see to it that the general public was at all times informed of the aims, activities, and accomplishments of the public schools. If the public was to get reliable information about the school system and what the school officials and teachers were attempting for the education of the children, this information had to come from the school forces of Louisiana. Every part of the educational personnel of Louisiana was to be held responsible for a definite part in the publicity work. The program made a good beginning for things to come in the ensuing years in Louisiana education.<sup>7</sup>

As well as setting a good example for other parishes to follow with relation to Louisiana Teachers Association membership, Richardson was an early member in the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association. In September 1925, he was recorded as a member along with

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<sup>6</sup>News item in the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association, (September, 1925), 30.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

twenty-two other Louisiana superintendents.<sup>8</sup>

The October 1925 editorial of the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association praised the Webster School System as being a leader in Louisiana education.

The teachers of Webster, as usual, joined the Association 100% strong during the institute held on the 3rd and 4th of September. Mr. Richardson's teachers are not only professionally minded, but they are well trained and render highly efficient services in the class room. Not only do the teachers and school officials of Webster achieve results, but they have the valuable ability of taking their achievements to the people and securing their hearty cooperation.

The people of Webster know what is being done by the school officials and the teachers, and they are willing to supply everything that is needed for the proper education of their children. The parish unit system of administration exists in its most complete form in Webster. Not only are all of the schools run the same length of time, taught by the same type of teachers, who are employed and supervised by the same superintendent, and high school advantages provided for all the children of high school grade in the parish, but all school facilities are standardized. One architect supervises the construction of all buildings, the same kind of furniture is used throughout the parish, and the same laboratory equipment is found in all the schools. School books and such accessories as ink, pencils, pens, and tablets are bought in bulk by the school board and distributed in proper quantities to all of the schools in the parish prior to opening day. Thus, in Webster Parish, there is no such thing as loss of time caused by a shortage of text books or other equipment required in class work.

The completeness of the parish unit system of school administration, as practiced in Webster Parish, has attracted the attention of students of school administration all over the country, and Mr. Richardson's ability to give facts to the people and to the press has done much to advertise Louisiana's most favored type of a parish school system.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>V. L. Roy, "Louisiana and the National Education Association," Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association (September, 1925), 47.

<sup>9</sup>Editorial, "With the School People," Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association (October, 1925), 34-35.

# I. LEADER IN THE LOUISIANA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

When the Louisiana Teachers Association met in November, 1925, at Baton Rouge, E. S. Richardson was elected to lead the organization through a year of outstanding accomplishments. Elected to assist him as vice-presidents were Y. L. Fontenot and G. O. Houston. R. H. Agate was to serve as treasurer and P. H. Griffith as secretary.<sup>10</sup>

The Resolutions Committee, of which Richardson was a member, made its usual report and the first resolution passed by the convention encompassed the greatest challenge that Richardson would face during his year as president. The resolution read:

That, the annual growth and development of Louisiana's public school system call for increasing school revenues, and that, to provide the additional revenues presently required we endorse and urge the adoption of the tobacco and cosmetics tax recommended by our state superintendent.<sup>11</sup>

In the November 1925 meeting of the House of Delegates of the Louisiana Teachers Association, a "Louisiana" committee of nine was authorized. The purpose of this committee was to devise ways and means of making it possible to teach Louisiana in all its aspects to the boys and girls in Louisiana schools. Fulfilling his responsibility as President of the Louisiana Teachers Association, Richardson appointed the committee, designating V. L. Roy as chairman.<sup>12</sup>

E. S. Richardson, expressing himself about the committee of nine, had this to say:

I am convinced that one of our greatest needs in Louisiana

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<sup>10</sup>News item in the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association, (February, 1926), 2.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>News item in the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association, (January, 1926), 43.

today, educationally, is to convince our own people of Louisiana's latent possibilities. It seems to me that this resolution is getting at the heart of the problem in the right way. I am sure that this step will meet the approval of all forward looking business and financial organizations in Louisiana.<sup>13</sup>

President Richardson received numerous letters expressing congratulations for this forward step represented by the "Louisiana" Committee. Letters were received from Louisiana Representatives in the Congress of the United States. Congressmen expressing congratulations in a special way were J. B. Aswell, James O'Connor, John N. Sandlin, Riley J. Wilson, Ladislav Lazaro, J. Zach Spearing, and E. S. Broussard. One of the most outstanding letters was reproduced in the February 1926 issue of the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association.

UNITED STATES SENATE  
Committee on Commerce  
Washington, D. C.

January 18, 1926

Prof. E. S. Richardson  
Pres., Louisiana Teachers Association,  
Minden, La.

Dear Professor Richardson:

Permit me to highly commend the movement on foot in Louisiana to enlist the assistance of schools in teaching the public, and especially the youth of our state, about the resources and potentialities of Louisiana. Such a plan is of paramount importance, and every citizen should take a deep interest in it.

If every true blooded Louisianian would first make an earnest effort to become acquainted with all phases of his state, and then tell outsiders about it, untold benefits would result, but unfortunately there seems to be a spirit of nonchalance on the part of our citizens. They will not take the trouble to study--to know Louisiana--and if the citizens are not familiar with its wonderful advantages what hope is there for visitors to be correctly informed when questions are asked regarding the state?

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., February, 1926, p. 24.



You, Professor Roy, and others, in starting a movement to teach our youth to know the State of Louisiana, have my heartfelt congratulations. Your program is extremely wise, and I wish you great success with it. I am willing to cooperate with you in any way possible, because advertising Louisiana is one of my pet hobbies.

With kindest personal regards and best wishes, believe me,

Sincerely yours,  
JOS. E. RANSELL<sup>14</sup>

E. S. Richardson availed himself of every possible opportunity to speak to various groups with relation to public health. On May 1, 1926, he addressed the student body of Louisiana State Normal College at Natchitoches on the topic "Public Health Education." Richardson opened his address by saying:

Our parents have told us that health is better than wealth. We have discovered that this old expression is even more than true; that real wealth and happiness depend solely on health. No sickly person can become a real wealthy person nor can a sickly nation become a rich and happy nation. We have discovered that individual health is fundamental to the success of an individual and that community health is fundamental to the success of a community.<sup>15</sup>

Mr. Richardson continued his address by relating the progress that had taken place in our great state and nation. He described the program of health that was being projected in Webster Parish. He also stressed that he felt it was the responsibility of every school teacher to be health conscious. He further stated that:

So far as I am concerned I do not care to employ any teacher in our system who is short in this major qualification. A careless, untidy, filthy teacher though he may

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>15</sup>News item in the Webster Signal [Minden] , May 20, 1926.

be efficient in Latin and Geometry, in my judgement, is an abomination and I hope the day will soon come when this type will no longer appeal to intelligent school boards.<sup>16</sup>

Before concluding his address to the Louisiana Normal student body, Superintendent Richardson struck hard at over-emphasis toward a physical education program geared for producing fine athletic teams. He felt that in many of the high schools the boy or girl who was born physically fit was given special training like the gladiator of old. Too much money, time, and effort was being expended to make him a member of a winning team. In the minds of too many people the high school or college that produced an annual winning team was considered as the more efficient institution. Richardson's hope was that more careful training would be given to the ninety and nine who happened to be born with certain defects that could be easily overcome if proper attention were given. He further suggested that some form of physical training be planned that would at least remedy the common physical handicaps in the masses. A plan that would bring the whole student body to a higher standard of physical efficiency was considered urgent.<sup>17</sup>

Superintendent Richardson gave similar addresses to the Louisiana Teachers' Convention when it convened in Alexandria on November 21, 22, 23, 1926. The Negro division heard his address entitled, "The Negro Teacher's Opportunity in the Schools." His address to the health section of the white division was entitled, "The Administration's Responsibility and Cooperation in the School's Health Program."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid.      <sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>News item in the Webster Signal [Minden] , November 16, 1926.

Prior to the failure of the 1924 Legislature to pass a proposed constitutional amendment to levy an additional two mill tax on all of the assessable property in the state for the support of the public schools, the school leaders of Louisiana had found very little demand to seek new sources of school revenues. When the Legislature, at the request of the Governor, refused to pass an amendment providing new taxes, the friends of public education were forced to study new forms of taxation other than the general property tax.<sup>19</sup>

A general sales tax seemed fair and equitable, as it would require each individual to pay according to the amount he consumed, but it was pointed out, on closer study, that the collection of such a tax would result in more bookkeeping than the average man was capable of doing, and that the cost would be too great. The luxury tax was brought forward and advocated as the most feasible one to submit to the Legislature.<sup>20</sup>

A number of prominent educators in Louisiana felt that the publicity campaign, so successfully launched by Mr. Houston during his term as President of the Louisiana Teachers Association, should be continued with renewed emphasis. Those who were most active in the support of E. S. Richardson for the presidency claimed that they selected him as a candidate largely because of their faith in his ability to give information to the public in an effective way. Desiring to live up to his pre-election promises, but at the same time determined to work in harmony with state officials, Richardson went to Baton Rouge soon after his election to consult with T. H. Harris concerning publicity work in connection with the Luxury

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<sup>19</sup>"A Story of the Enactment of the Tobacco Law," Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association (September, 1926), 5.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

Tax. Mr. Harris advised that it was the Governor's wish that no publicity be given the taxation plan that had been decided upon, and that a refusal to heed the desire of the Chief Executive could result in the withdrawal of his friendly attitude toward the passage of the proposed school legislation. Richardson, under the circumstances, accepted the advice given him by Superintendent Harris.<sup>21</sup>

Indirect publicity work did continue as a special research committee prepared a clear and comprehensive report on certain inequalities in the Louisiana School System. Members of the Legislature were provided copies of the report. A great deal of time was spent throughout the state giving the people facts about the accomplishments and needs of their schools.<sup>22</sup>

Up until early April of 1926, it appeared that the Governor was correct in his attitude toward publicity, as no opposition to the Luxury Tax had developed. The peace and harmony that prevailed soon turned into the most determined and persistent opposition.<sup>23</sup>

It was believed by many that resolutions passed by the Claiborne Parish School Board on April 5, 1926, set the opposition into motion. These resolutions condemned the State Board of Education for what was termed "a wasteful use of public funds" in creating the office of purchasing agent for the state educational institutions, and rescinding its former action in endorsing the Luxury Tax. On April 14th, printed copies of these resolutions were received by parish and state school officials throughout Louisiana.<sup>24</sup> E. S. Richardson, fearing that uninformed citizens and a few politicians might be misled, and acting in his capacity as President of the

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 8

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

Louisiana Teachers Association, addressed a letter to members of the Police Juries, School Boards, Parish Superintendents, and High School Principals, answering the resolutions. The letter stated in part:

It is gratifying to note that the Claiborne fiasco failed to stampede the educational forces of Louisiana; in fact, so far as we have been able to ascertain, not a single reputable member of the teaching profession in the state was fooled by it. The loyalty of the school people of Louisiana to the state school officials, as proven by their united stand against the spirit of these resolutions, is strong proof of their professional attitude.<sup>25</sup>

Opposition did develop, for within two weeks after the Claiborne documents were distributed, nearly all the big daily papers were writing editorials against the measure, and practically every drug store in the state was in possession of a petition for use in getting customers to register opposition to a proposed tax on tobacco and cosmetics. After the newspapers took their stand, most commercial organizations in the state passed resolutions against the Luxury Tax before the Legislature met. Tobacco and cosmetic interests in and out of Louisiana flooded retailers with literature designed to defeat the measure.<sup>26</sup>

Opposition was centered in New Orleans and Shreveport, so Richardson made an attempt during the first week of May to turn the tide in the direction of the Luxury Tax. He called meetings of school officials living in the vicinity of each of these two major cities. The group that met in New Orleans called upon Mayor O'Keefe to explain the school situation and solicit his support. He refused to support the Luxury Tax and came out in open opposition.<sup>27</sup>

Richardson invited representatives of the press and the officials of

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

the commercial organizations to be present at the Shreveport meeting. Several superintendents and presidents of school boards made talks. It was brought out that the combined assessment of fourteen parishes in the trade territory of Shreveport was less than that of Caddo Parish, and that the total number of children in this group of parishes was 100,277, while Caddo's total was only 30,390.<sup>28</sup>

Representatives of commercial organizations were called upon to speak. Most of them stated that they were not opposed to public education and did not deny the existence of a shortage of school funds, but protested vigorously against meeting the needs by taxing tobacco and cosmetics. The representatives of the commercial bodies attempted to make it appear that the tobacco tax had been a failure in the states that had tried it. Richardson refuted this argument in a forceful way with facts he had personally gathered from Arkansas where such a tax was already law.<sup>29</sup>

On May 10, 1926, the day on which the Shreveport meeting was held, the Louisiana Legislature convened in regular session, and on the following day Representative Murphy J. Sylvest, Chairman of the House Committee on Education, introduced the Luxury Tax Bill as House Bill No. 2, which had been written in advance by Superintendent Harris with the assistance of the Attorney General. The opposition intensified greatly following the introduction.<sup>30</sup>

Early attempts to strangle the new bill were defeated and it was referred to the Ways and Means Committee for Committee action. The next problem was to get the Committee to report the bill favorably. The nature and extent of the opposition was great, and the difficulty of creating

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

sentiment in favor of the bill was next to impossible with all the daily papers fighting it. On May 13th E. S. Richardson went to Baton Rouge to assume personal charge of the Teachers Association's part in the fight.<sup>31</sup>

Upon reaching the Capital City, Richardson found that Superintendent Harris was in very bad health, and that his physician had repeatedly advised that he stay away from his office. Due to this situation, much of the work of securing support for the measure was assigned to Mr. Richardson. Superintendent Harris, however, remained in Baton Rouge and made himself available for conferences against the advice of his physician. His advice and assistance were irreplaceable, yet there were many types of work that could be done successfully by others. Mr. Richardson handled this phase of the work with considerable success.<sup>32</sup>

Richardson surveyed the situation briefly, and left on May 14th for Franklinton, where he conferred at length with Senator Delos Johnson, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education and Representative M. J. Sylvest, the introducer of the bill. The purpose was to outline a complete plan of action. A method of procedure was set up and its main features were adhered to throughout the campaign.<sup>33</sup>

The drug and tobacco interests established headquarters in the Alvis Hotel and mapped plans for fighting the measure. The daily papers continued to write editorials and carried other reading materials designed

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<sup>31</sup>News item in the Webster Signal [Minden] , May, 1926.

<sup>32</sup>"A Story of the Enactment of the Tobacco Tax Law," op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

to defeat the bill. Even though early attempts to kill the bill had failed, very few supporters felt that it had any chance of passage.<sup>34</sup>

When Richardson returned to Baton Rouge from Franklinton, he took up the difficult task of attempting to create sympathetic public sentiment without the aid of the press. He made an appeal to the superintendents to influence prominent citizens and have them request the members of the House to support the measure. Richardson's appeals were heeded with remarkable promptness and effectiveness. In a very short time representatives were receiving telegrams, resolutions, and petitions urging them to come to the rescue of the public schools. Richardson maintained constant contact with superintendents by wire, telephone, and circular letters. A hearing was announced for the bill on May 26th and maximum effort was exerted to persuade a favorable report from the committee.<sup>35</sup>

To meet the opposition at the committee hearing, Superintendent Harris and Mr. Richardson accumulated many letters and telegrams from prominent citizens, state officials, and dealers in other states where a tobacco law existed to show how the law operated. The object was to show whether or not it had driven business out of the state, whether or not it was evaded and to what extent, its collection was much of a nuisance, and what the attitude of the general public was toward it. Hundreds of telegrams, letters, resolutions and petitions signed by citizens of Louisiana endorsing the bill were secured. In addition to these, Mr. Richardson obtained completed questionnaires from druggists of Arkansas, and also letters from the secretaries of ten large chambers of commerce in that state, all of which favored the tax in the strongest

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.



possible language.<sup>36</sup>

Richardson asked a number of superintendents and prominent citizens representing various sections of the state to appear before the committee. He also made arrangements to have several men who had had actual experience in the administration of the tobacco law in other states to participate in the hearing. The arrangements were fulfilled by state officials from Arkansas, Tennessee and South Carolina.<sup>37</sup>

The committee hearing was held as scheduled on May 26 at 8:00 p. m. Each side was to be given two hours to present its case. When the last speaker had completed his arguments, it was twelve o'clock and the members of the committee who had listened to the arguments for four hours appeared to be quite tired. Out of consideration for the committee, and also feeling that the opponents of the bill had made a very poor case, Representative Sylvest announced that he would not introduce Mr. Harris and Mr. Richardson, the speakers he had held in reserve for rebuttal. This concluded the first public hearing before the Ways and Means Committee.<sup>38</sup>

On the day following the first committee hearing, a conference was called and with the aid of the out-of-state officials the bill was rewritten. The new bill eliminated the tax on cosmetics and the tobacco tax was graduated so that some forms were taxed more heavily than others. The new bill was submitted to the Ways and Means Committee.<sup>39</sup>

Another public hearing was set for June 1. When the hearing convened, Representative Sylvest pointed out the provisions of the substitute bill and explained why it had been offered. The only other speakers presented were E. S. Richardson and T. H. Harris, who made very brief addresses

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

regarding the need of additional school revenues. Richardson and Harris made it plain that the school people were not wedded to the Luxury Tax, and that they would be willing to support any other measure that had a chance of passage and would produce needed revenues. It was urged that a report be made on the bill. The committee by a seven to six vote made an unfavorable report. The next day, after several attempts to kill the bill, it was referred back to the Ways and Means Committee.<sup>40</sup>

On June 8th the bill was reported unfavorably a second time and the Governor called a special conference of legislators to make a final study of the bill as to school needs. Richardson and Harris attended all of these conference meetings that were held for the purpose of studying all school measures that had been introduced for the purpose of relieving the financial stress of the public school system. The Conference Committee urged the Ways and Means Committee to give favorable consideration to a twenty per cent tax on all forms of tobacco, with the exception of snuff and plug chewing tobacco.<sup>41</sup>

The Ways and Means Committee refused to accept the Conference Report. The fight seemed to be lost and even E. S. Richardson, for the time being, seemed to lose his usual bouyant attitude. On June 18 the bill came out of committee on a minority report and its opponents failed in an attempt to definitely kill the Luxury Tax Bill. After certain minor revisions and continued legislative maneuvers by Sylvest, Richardson and Harris, the Tobacco Tax Law replaced the Sylvest Luxury Tax Law, passed in both Houses of the Legislature and received the Governor's signature on July 10, 1926.

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

The final passage of the Tobacco Tax Law had become reality because the educational forces of Louisiana had worked in a tireless, unyielding manner.<sup>42</sup>

In a circular letter written to the educational forces of Louisiana after the close of the Legislature, Superintendent Harris made the following statement regarding the work of Edwin Sanders Richardson:

At the head of the list in the fight for the passage of this measure, I wish to place Supt. E. S. Richardson of Webster Parish. For a month or more, Supt. Richardson laid aside the duties of his office, spent practically all of his time in Baton Rouge and devoted the best that is in him to the interest of the luxury tax measure. THE BILL NEVER WOULD HAVE PASSED WITHOUT HIM. He was on the alert day and night and utilized every possible influence that could have a bearing in creating sentiment for the bill. He did a good job, and as far as I can estimate, fell short in no particular in meeting the exacting responsibilities devolving upon him as the chief sponsor of this measure.<sup>43</sup>

When the Louisiana Teachers Association convened in Alexandria on November 18, 1926, E. S. Richardson addressed the association at the first general session. During his address he made a thorough report on the work in the Legislature for securing passage of the Tobacco Tax. E. L. Stephens in an article in the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association made the following statements about Superintendent Richardson's address:

Ed. Richardson proved clearly that he had rendered genuine service to the cause of education during his year's term of office as president of the Association. His report upon the work in the Legislature for the securing of the passage of the Tobacco Tax was thorough and illuminating. It was a convincing explanation of the fact that the power of the teachers of Louisiana through this organization has at

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

last become strong enough to effect desired legislation. And this fact marked another high point of the Association's achievement in its life of thirty-four years.<sup>44</sup>

As E. S. Richardson terminated his term of office as President of Louisiana Teachers Association he was an ardent supporter for working in the direction of legislation favoring teacher retirement and tenure of office. The convention passed resolutions favoring studies and plans for such legislation in the near future.<sup>45</sup>

C. B. Turner, supervising principal of the Baton Rouge Schools, was unanimously elected to succeed E. S. Richardson as President of the Louisiana Teachers Association.<sup>46</sup>

In the May 1929 issue of the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association, several Louisiana superintendents were given special recognition. Superintendent Richardson was among those recognized for outstanding work in their respective school systems. The following tribute captioned a picture of Superintendent Richardson of Webster Parish:

The details of Supt. Richardson's school system are so well known to the people of Louisiana that there is no need of repeating them here. Mr. Richardson built his system upon the idea that all the children in the parish are entitled to equal educational opportunities and that it is possible, even in rural parishes, to offer all the children practically the same facilities as to buildings, equipment, and teacher service.

The superintendent of Webster has made a thorough study of school administration, particularly the parish unit plan as practiced in Louisiana, and has been instrumental in carrying the story of Louisiana's school system to the

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<sup>44</sup>E. S. Stephens, "Snap Shots and Time Exposures," Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association (January, 1927), 11.

<sup>45</sup>News item in the Alexandria Daily Town Talk, November 18, 1926.

<sup>46</sup>E. S. Stephens, op. cit., p. 10.

surrounding states. By means of his exhibits and speeches at state and national associations, many educators throughout the nation have learned of the advantages of the parish unit plan of school administration. Through his gospel of equal rights for all the children, Mr. Richardson has become one of the best known educators in the South.

Attitude towards his profession: All his teachers are members of the L. T. A.<sup>47</sup>

On February 7, 1930, E. S. Richardson addressed a Conference on Jeanes Teachers in Alexandria about "The Value of the Jeanes' Supervising Teacher to the Parish Superintendent." Richardson felt that the value of the Jeanes' teacher work depended to a large extent on the favorableness or unfavorableness of local conditions. During his address to the Conference of Jeanes Teachers, Richardson outlined the broad objectives of the Jeanes teacher working under the direction of the county superintendent as follows: (1) to help and encourage the rural teacher; (2) to introduce into small country schools simple home industries; (3) to give lessons on sanitation, cleanliness and health; (4) to promote the improvement of school houses and school grounds; and (5) to organize clubs for the betterment of the school and neighborhood.<sup>48</sup>

He viewed the attitude of the parish superintendent as paramount in order for the Jeanes teacher to do a good job. The superintendent had to view the necessity of Negro education with enthusiasm. Reflecting the view of many superintendents, Richardson stated:

Some superintendents and school boards are not yet enthusiastic on this question; some officials give little

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<sup>47</sup>"The Mature Group," Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association, May, 1929, p. 45.

<sup>48</sup>E. S. Richardson, "The Value of the Jeanes' Supervising Teacher to the Parish Superintendent." Address delivered to the Conference of Jeanes Teachers (Alexandria), February 7, 1930.

or no positive cooperation and support; while others attack this very elementary problem in the light of bookish definitions as to the supervisory process. Technical methods in supervision do not apply in this work. In other words, some of us seem to be more interested in the method of doing the technical supervisory job than we are in the end obtained. Both the parish superintendent and the Jeanes' supervising teacher should realize in the very beginning that the job is very elementary, but very important. Technical methods such as are discussed at length by our educational writers on this subject cannot wholly be relied upon to apply to this problem.<sup>49</sup>

Richardson viewed the improvement of Negro education with utmost urgency. He felt that the South could not rise to its peak as a leading section of our great nation unless immediate steps were taken to upgrade Negro education. Before moving into a definite description of Negro education in Webster Parish, Richardson challenged leaders of the South to wake up.

The highly favorable condition that the South now enjoys will not always exist. Should we not at once begin to capitalize in a large way the South's greatest asset, namely, its black labor? Should we be less wise than a monarch, whose aim would be for profit only? Are we being lulled to inactivity by false sentiment and sleeping idly on a field of hidden treasure?

It seems to me that the time has come for leaders in religion, education, and business to assert themselves definitely on the affirmative side of the question of Negro education. No state or section can develop normally, educationally, religiously or commercially when so large a per cent of its population is dependent, sick, and illiterate. It is time for the South to wake up to this situation and use every means possible to stamp out the curse of illiteracy on our fair Southland.<sup>50</sup>

A Conference of North Louisiana School officials was held at Louisiana Polytechnic Institute on March 22, 1930. Dr. Freden, Head of the Department of Education at Louisiana Polytechnic organized and directed the conference. During the conference, Superintendent E. S. Richardson

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid      <sup>50</sup>Ibid.

read a paper in which he emphasized the value of having teachers stimulate the thought activities of pupils. A brilliant college record, according to Richardson, did not necessarily mean that a teacher could perform that task successfully.<sup>51</sup>

During the sixteen years that E. S. Richardson was superintendent of Webster Parish Schools, he served on numerous committees that constantly worked to upgrade the educational situation in Louisiana. Richardson served consistently on the Legislative Committee and the Resolutions Committee during his tenure as superintendent. With the exception of the 1934-35 school year, he was a member of the Legislative Committee from 1926 through 1936.<sup>52</sup> During the 1934-35 school year he served on the Committee on Citizenship and Character Training.<sup>53</sup>

During the 1935-36 school year, E. S. Richardson was chairman of the Legislative Committee. It was during this chairmanship that the Teacher Tenure Law and the Teacher Retirement Act were enacted under the administration of Governor Richard W. Leche. A committee composed of Spencer Phillips, President of the Association, G. O. Houston, secretary, L. E. Frazar, W. L. Colvin, L. W. Ferguson, members of the executive council, and E. S. Richardson and H. L. Campbell, members of the Legislative Committee, visited Governor Leche during the campaign. He promised to sponsor the acts mentioned. Candidate Leche did become Governor Leche and these promises became realities.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>News item in the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association, (April, 1930), 39-40.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 1926-1936.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., September, 1935, p. 38.

<sup>54</sup>News item in the Louisiana Schools (September, 1936), 3.

## II. PROTAGONIST FOR IMPROVED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ON A NATIONAL BASIS

There is every reason to believe that Edwin Sanders Richardson had considerable influence on educational development outside the State of Louisiana. It was early during his superintendency of Webster Parish Schools that he became closely affiliated with the National Education Association. When the Department of Superintendence, a section of the National Education Association, met in Chicago during the week of February 23-28, 1924, Richardson was in attendance. Several other outstanding superintendents also attended, namely, W. P. Prescott of St. Landry, G. O. Houston of DeSoto, E. H. Fisher of Bienville, W. P. Arnette of Jefferson Davis, R. G. Corkern of Allen, E. E. Lyon of St. Tammany, Finly Stanly of Vernon, W. B. Hatcher of East Baton Rouge, W. J. Avery of Rapides, H. L. Campbell of Lincoln, Nicholas Bauer of Orleans, and John S. Patton of Claiborne.<sup>55</sup> During the 1924 summer meeting of the National Educational Association Richardson was elected chairman of the County Superintendents' Section.<sup>56</sup>

Soon after Richardson became superintendent of the Webster Parish School System, he perfected the county unit system of education. Just as the people of Webster were proud of their new system of education, Richardson believed that others should follow the example of Webster in providing equal educational opportunities for all children at equal cost.

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<sup>55</sup>News item in the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association (April, 1924), 43.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., September, 1924, p. 17.



Superintendent Richardson prepared an exhibit that depicted the Webster system of education. The exhibit portrayed the old system and the new system of education in Webster Parish giving the advantages of the county unit of administration. After winning four out of six major prizes at the Louisiana State Fair, the Webster Parish School Exhibit was sent to the Department of Superintendence in Cincinnati in February 1925 by Richardson, as chairman of the County Superintendents' Section. Because the county unit system of administration was a problem which many school boards were seriously considering at that time, the Webster Parish Exhibit was eagerly examined by Superintendents from all sections of the United States. The exhibit was located in a wide vestibule at the entrance to the auditorium where the meetings of the County Superintendents' section were held.<sup>57</sup>

Surrounded by the exhibit and charts illustrating the county unit, Richardson delivered an address in a forceful manner to the superintendents from all sections of the nation. The address was most effective and placed Louisiana's school system before the educators of the country in a favorable light.<sup>59</sup>

Richardson received praise from his own state as well as from various sections of the United States. The Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association had the following comments:

The teaching profession of Louisiana owes Superintendent Richardson a debt of gratitude for the effective manner in

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<sup>57</sup>"The Webster Parish School Exhibit at the Department of Superintendence," Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association, (May, 1925), 24.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

which he exhibited and interpreted our school system. Favorable comment upon the Webster Exhibit and Mr. Richardson's address has come from many quarters. In appreciation of the splendid services rendered the State of Louisiana by his exhibit and address, we take pleasure in giving quotations from some of the letters recently received by Mr. Richardson.<sup>59</sup>

State Superintendent T. H. Harris in a letter to E. S. Richardson made the following statements:

Your exhibit made a remarkably fine showing and was praised by people from all parts of the United States.

I do not know of one thing that has ever directed nation-wide attention of our progress in public education in a more forceful and concrete fashion than was done by your highly meritorious exhibit and the attractive manner in which you presented it.<sup>60</sup>

Words of praise came from Louisiana, Iowa, New York, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Kentucky, and South Carolina. A. J. Jolly, Editor and Manager of the Southern School Journal of Kentucky, wrote Superintendent Richardson offering the following proposition:

We are setting apart five or ~~six~~ pages of our April issue of the Southern School Journal for your article. Of course you will have quite a number of cuts and if you do not take up that much space it will be all right, but we want to give you all the space you want to tell your story.<sup>61</sup>

The story of the county unit system in Webster Parish did appear in the April 1925 issue of the Southern School Journal. Nine pages were devoted to telling the story of school consolidation in Webster Parish, Louisiana.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid.      <sup>60</sup>Ibid.      <sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>62</sup>E. S. Richardson, "The County Unit System in Webster Parish", American School Journal, XXXVI (April, 1925), 13-22.

The May 1925 issue of the American School Board Journal, a periodical of school administrators, published an article by E. S. Richardson entitled "The County Unit and the Consolidated School," giving wider publicity to the county unit system of administration.<sup>63</sup> The same article appeared in the Journal of Rural Education in September 1925.<sup>64</sup>

When the Department of Superintendence met in Washington, D. C., in February 1926, E. S. Richardson was again in attendance with a number of Louisiana Superintendents. The exhibit displayed the year before in Cincinnati was again shown at the Washington meeting. Before making the trip to Washington, Superintendent Richardson wrote to more than a hundred Louisianians living in Washington inviting them to visit the Louisiana headquarters at the Washington Hotel and to inspect the exhibit. As a result of this invitation, many former Louisianians visited the headquarters.<sup>65</sup>

Superintendent Richardson was on the program of the parish superintendents for a discussion of the type of parish school administration practiced in Louisiana at the 1927 Dallas meeting of the Department of Superintendence. The subject was thoroughly covered in an enthusiastic manner. Following his address, a pamphlet giving a brief explanation of the school system of Webster Parish was in great demand. The few copies

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<sup>63</sup>E. S. Richardson, "The County Unit and the Consolidated School," American School Board Journal, LXX (May, 1925), 54.

<sup>64</sup>E. S. Richardson, "The County Unit and the Consolidated School," Journal of Rural Education, V (September, 1925), 12-16.

<sup>65</sup>News item in the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association (April, 1926), 16.

that Richardson had with him were exhausted long before the demand was supplied.<sup>66</sup>

A news item in the Fort Worth Record-Telegram on September 15, 1927 reported an experimental project in Williamson County that had possibilities of revolutionizing rural education in Texas. For the first time Texas was experimenting with the "county unit" system of education that E. S. Richardson for several years had so widely publicized. A special act of the Texas Legislature had been passed to permit Williamson County to effect this new plan of school administration. The news article further reported:

It is thought by leading educators that the unit plan should be made statewide and that its adoption would mean tremendous increase in efficiency of the school system. It has been adopted by Webster Parish, Louisiana, and its unusual success in that parish will be reported on by Superintendent E. S. Richardson at the annual meeting of the Texas State Teachers' Association in Houston in November.<sup>67</sup>

At that time the Texas school system was under the superintendent election system, whereby the voters picked a superintendent from a group of politically oriented candidates. The superintendent in most cases entered his office handicapped by opposition incurred during his campaign. His every move from then on was somewhat politically guided.

The Texas Outlook, a monthly publication of the Texas Teachers' Association, in the October 1927 issue covered the county unit plan of education thoroughly as practiced in Webster Parish, Louisiana.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., April 1927, 32-33.

<sup>67</sup>News item in the Fort Worth Record-Telegram, September 15, 1927.

<sup>68</sup>E. S. Richardson, "The County Unit Plan of Education," Texas Outlook (October, 1927), 34.

When the Texas State Teachers' Association convened in San Antonio during the last week of November 1928, the substitution of the county unit system of school administration as a matter of modern business in education in place of the haphazard district system, was the keynote of the opening session.<sup>69</sup>

During the opening session S. M. N. Marrs, State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Texas, sketched the history of the organization of the district unit of control in Texas and explained how unfair this system was in that it offered tremendously unequal school opportunities to children. Superintendent Richardson spoke next and urged educators of Texas to face the truth about their school situation, to quit dallying with it when part of the people were growing up in ignorance. Richardson, before going into detail about the system as operated in Webster Parish, stated, "It is a ridiculous proposition that we as teachers talk about one-room school efficiency when we can organize in bigger units."<sup>70</sup>

The results of Richardson's efforts in Texas was evidenced by editorial remarks in the Shreveport Times on February 1, 1929.

Webster Parish takes pride in the fact that it may become the humble instrument of producing a beneficial change in the educational system of the great state of Texas. In his recent message to the Texas legislature, Governor Moody recommended adoption of the county unit plan of school administration.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>News item in the Fort Worth Record-Telegram, November 29, 1928.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>Editorial in the Shreveport Times, February 1, 1929.

An editorial in the Webster Signal on February 7, 1929, had the following statements to make about progress in Texas education:

Those of us, who read Governor Dan Moody's message to the Texas legislature now assembled in Austin, cannot help but feel proud of the fact that he has recommended to that body the county unit organization of school administration for Texas. It will be remembered that Governor Moody was present at the state teachers' association at San Antonio last month, and while there saw the Webster Parish county unit exhibit. Governor Moody also has recommended that county superintendents in Texas be elected by county boards rather than by popular vote.

This is very gratifying, indeed. If it is true that the Webster school exhibit at San Antonio so favorably impressed Governor Moody that he decided, from this observation and study, to recommend the county unit for Texas public schools, Louisiana's fine education system has exerted a beneficial influence beyond its borders. And, incidentally, Webster, where the public school system is at its best, has been the means by which Louisiana's school was so well and so effectively advertised.<sup>72</sup>

Edwin Sanders Richardson carried his crusade for equal educational opportunity for all children into numerous states during the years from 1927 to his later years as Webster Parish's School Superintendent.

When the Oklahoma Education Association met in Oklahoma City on February 9, 10, 11, 1928, Richardson was invited to deliver two major addresses. The first was entitled, "The County Unit of School Administration," and the second was "The County Child." He was also an honored guest at the Educational Research luncheon held on the first day of the convention. Dr. Ernest Horn of Iowa University was another guest of honor and principal speaker at the occasion.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Editorial in the Webster Signal [Minden] , February 7, 1929.

<sup>73</sup> Official Program of the Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Oklahoma Education Association, February 9, 10, 11, 1928.

After returning to Minden from Oklahoma City, Richardson traveled to Boston, Massachusetts, and delivered an address entitled "More Efficient Machinery for Rural Schools" before the Department of Superintendence.<sup>74</sup> Taking advantage of his long, developed philosophy from agricultural days, that seeing was believing, he carried along his school exhibit that had already been viewed by thousands.

Striking hard at "resistance to change," Richardson made the following statements:

. . . . I am of the opinion that our old school machinery installed years ago, which is still in vogue in a number of states, has not kept pace with other lines of human endeavor. This old machinery has served well its purpose in days gone by; but we find it entirely inadequate to meet present day problems.

The time has arrived in the history of our educational development when we shall be forced to either install entirely new machinery or overhaul the old. I am afraid some of the states have waited too long already to get the full trade-in value on the old machines.<sup>75</sup>

During the summer of 1928, Superintendent Richardson attended school at George Peabody College for Teachers in Memphis, Tennessee. While there, he delivered several lectures on the consolidation of rural schools. He also went to Conway, Arkansas during his summer stay at Peabody College to address a state meeting of school superintendents.<sup>76</sup> His address was a continuation of his appeal for a "square deal" to the country boy and girl in education. He dealt specifically with methods by which educational

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<sup>74</sup>E. S. Richardson, "More Efficient Machinery for Rural Schools," Address delivered in Boston, Massachusetts, February 28, 1928.

<sup>75</sup>News item in the Shreveport Journal, March 1, 1928.

<sup>76</sup>News item in the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association (September, 1928), 32.

opportunities could be equalized for the country and city students.<sup>77</sup>

In his address, Richardson attacked the Arkansas and Tennessee system under which the county treasurer received a commission for the handling of common school funds, and in many cases received more salary than the superintendent. He also condemned those members of chambers of commerce, Rotary, Lions and Kiwanis Clubs and other civic organizations, who "believed by donating of hogs, cows and chickens they cancelled their obligation to country people, without touching the great field of public school education." He further scored counties which permitted one-room schools to remain.<sup>78</sup>

Richardson challenged the educators of Arkansas to "stand firm on the proposition to give a square deal in education to the country boy and girl. If you do, the politicians and all other opponents, facing this honest effort will fade away like a light frost before the morning sun." He told the group about driving out from Conway the day before and finding a one-room school under the very shadow of their great colleges and near such a great center of enlightenment as Conway. He stated, "such a system as this is miserable."<sup>79</sup>

At the close of the address, one of the audience asked if such a system as the county unit was democratic. "Is it democratic?" Mr. Richardson repeated:

It is just as democratic as sending a congressman to Washington and allowing him to vote for you on national questions. Some years ago I drove out into the country in Louisiana and approached a schoolhouse where a great

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<sup>77</sup>News item in the Shreveport Journal, July 31, 1928.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.



commotion was in progress. I asked what was happening and was told that the school district was electing a teacher. Every now and then 'damned lie' came hurtling out the windows. Maybe that was a democratic form of school control. We must get down to the idea that the selection of school teachers and other phases of education must be left to educators, and if a superintendent can't handle his job, get rid of him and find someone who can.<sup>80</sup>

Richardson's series of addresses impressed the county superintendents to the extent that a resolution was unanimously adopted asking the State Department of Education to retain him as the special lecturer of the 1929 conference.<sup>81</sup>

Following his address in Conway, Arkansas, Richardson was invited to speak at Paris, Arkansas during September of 1928. The Shreveport Journal on September 18 of that year reprinted an article that had appeared in the Paris newspaper a few days before. The educational meeting was termed a grand success with more than six hundred in attendance. The news report labeled Mr. Richardson as an educator of national fame, heading a county school system rated as one of the best in the United States.<sup>82</sup>

In his address, Mr. Richardson stated that Logan County had four hundred and eighteen too many directors, because seven were enough. Richardson recommended that the school districts for Logan County be cut from ninety-six to two. He further commented:

. . . some of these days we will find out the school funds of Arkansas have been wasted, and that the people of the state, who claim to be interested in education will bow their heads in shame.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>Ibid.      <sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>News item in the Shreveport Journal, September 18, 1928.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

The writer of the news article urged the people of Logan County to give serious consideration to Richardson's remarks, because fifty per cent of the children were not going beyond the sixth grade and six per cent were going to high school. He closed his news release with the following statement:

We know that a complete school reformation cannot be brought about in a week or a year, yet we do know that this reformation must come and will come. The few people who are really interested in rural education will not stop. Will you join and help us?<sup>84</sup>

In a letter from Superintendent W. H. Houser of Logan County, Paris, Arkansas, Mr. Richardson was thanked for services rendered. A date was also set for Logan County school officials to visit Webster Parish schools on October 15 of that year. Mr. Houser in his letter stated, "Our people are talking schools as they have never talked before."<sup>85</sup>

Richardson continued his push for better educational opportunities on a nation-wide basis as he published an article in the April 1929 issue of the Nation's Schools entitled "How the County Unit System Enables the Board to Save Money." He pointed out that it was society's responsibility to provide equal educational opportunities for rural and city children and that this could be achieved by applying business-like methods to school procedures.<sup>86</sup>

In April 1929, Richardson published an article in the National Education Association Journal entitled "The County Unit in Webster Parish."

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Letter from W. H. Houser, County Superintendent, to E. S. Richardson, September 14, 1928.

<sup>86</sup>E. S. Richardson, "How the County Unit System Enables the Board to Save Money," Nation's Schools, III (April, 1929), 27-33.

Pictures were presented with the article showing home economics classes in operation for high school girls. A picture depicting the unique method of collecting milk from the farmers over the parish by use of special racks welded on the back of school transfers was also printed with the article. As the county unit proved to be advantageous in unforeseen areas, Richardson would combine these ideas in new articles for publication to convince outmoded school districts of the many advantages possible in the county unit of administration.<sup>87</sup>

Richardson was invited to speak before the State Teachers Association of South Carolina at Charleston on November 7, 1929. Again, his address on "The County Form of School Administration" was received with enthusiasm by teachers and school officials of that state.<sup>88</sup> After speaking in Charleston, Richardson returned by way of Georgia and delivered consecutive addresses at District Conventions during the week of November 11-15 in Statesboro, Athens, Americus, and Cartersville.<sup>89</sup>

The December 1929 issue of the Georgia Education Journal announced that the subject for debate among the high schools of the state for the following spring would be: "Resolved, that the county should be the unit of administration of public education in Georgia."<sup>90</sup> The announcement also

<sup>87</sup>E. S. Richardson, "The County Unit in Webster Parish," National Education Association Journal, XVIII (April, 1929), 103-104.

<sup>88</sup>News item in the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association (December, 1929), 43.

<sup>89</sup>News item in the Georgia Education Journal, XXII (November, 1929), 27.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., December, 1929, p. 28.

noted that Superintendent E. S. Richardson had discussed ably and well the working of the county unit plan at the earlier district conventions. The February 1930 issue of the Georgia Education Journal followed this announcement with a five page story by E. S. Richardson on "The County Unit as it Functions in Webster Parish, Louisiana." This story was to give impetus to the debates that were to follow.<sup>91</sup>

On February 24, 1931, Richardson again had the opportunity to tell educators how the county unit system of education had proved advantageous. During his address to the Division of County Superintendents and Rural Supervisors in Detroit, Michigan, he described how the county unit of school administration had met a drought emergency. He pointed out in his address that it was a generally conceded fact that in order for a school system to claim efficiency, it had to serve the children in the classrooms and also serve the community. He clearly illustrated that this dual function could not be executed successfully where small separate units of school government existed. He then explained how the county unit had functioned to put in motion a plan of operation that saved thousands of dollars worth of food for winter consumption in Webster homes.<sup>92</sup>

During the summer of 1931 Superintendent E. S. Richardson was a member of the summer school faculty of the Central State Teachers College of Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. This gave him further opportunities to present the parish unit of school administration as he taught courses in public school administration. He was accompanied on the trip by Mrs. Richardson and their daughter, Ruth. During his stay in Michigan, Mr. Richardson

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid., February, 1930, pp. 11-16.

<sup>92</sup>E. S. Richardson, "How the County Unit of School Administration Met a Drought Emergency," Address delivered to the Division of County Superintendents and Rural Supervisors of the National Education Association in Detroit, Michigan, February 24, 1931.

delivered an address before the Normal College student body at Ypsilanti, and before the student body at the Mt. Pleasant Normal School.<sup>93</sup>

In the course of his address, Mr. Richardson pointed out to the educators of Michigan some of the problems confronting the rural schools of their state. He said, in part:

Notwithstanding the fact that Michigan is one of the wealthiest and most progressive states, I have found the same rural school situation here that prevails in other states. Michigan is teeming with one-room schools serving small districts controlled entirely by local boards. There are more school officials in a single county than in the whole state of Louisiana. When taking a picture of a one-room school, I looked across a wheat field and saw another. If my camera had been equipped with a long range lens I could have taken both schools at one exposure. The school tax rate in various districts in some counties ranges from nothing to forty-seven mills. I visited a school where the trustees, who employed and paid the teacher, could not sign their names. Members of my classes have reported that schools have actually operated in this state with an enrollment as low as two pupils; that in some schools teachers are changed at midterm in order to furnish jobs for community girls. I have seen a school house located on a paved road where eight grades were being taught by one teacher. The school is less than one-half mile from the city limits where is located one of Michigan's efficient high schools. I have seen a seven-pupil one-room school located on a good road within one and one-half miles of a rural consolidated high school where a bus, partially loaded, passed its doors daily. These children are costing the community \$900.00 for instruction alone. Such duplication is not uncommon. Another district has a valuation of \$35,000.00, school rate of forty mills with a school population of five. It pays \$180.00 for administration, \$40.00 to the moderator, who can hardly sign his name, \$60.00 to the treasurer, who cannot keep books, \$80.00 to the director, who cannot make a report. This school is located on a gravel road only six miles from a high school where these children could receive high school opportunities without extra cost. I visited a village where the children walked out of town in three directions to attend three different one-room schools. One county in the state has 142 units of government administered by 941 public officials. In this county there are 97 separate and distinct school boards.

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<sup>93</sup>News item in the Journal of the Louisiana Teachers Association, (September, 1931), 26.

Recently one of these districts, with a population of six children, voted a \$300,000.00 bond issue to build a school.<sup>94</sup>

The noted Webster Parish Exhibit was on display most of the summer in the foyer of the administration building of Central State Teachers College. The exhibit was used frequently as he taught two sections of Rural Education 302 at the College.<sup>95</sup>

Richardson took advantage of every opportunity to speak to people about better education. On July 8, 1931, he spoke in Beaverton, Michigan, to the Beaverton Rural Agricultural Committee. The topic of discussion was the one-room school. Professor Richardson pointed out that it was time for parents to forget their fond memories that went back to one-room schools and begin to consider their children. He told that Abraham Lincoln was a great man not because he went to a one-room school but in spite of it. Richardson also expressed the belief that it was a coming necessity for teachers to be selected by school men and not by inadequate school boards.<sup>96</sup>

"Negro Education" was Richardson's topic for an address delivered to the Rotary Club on Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, on July 13, 1931. He declared that the Negro's position in the South was misunderstood, and that the Negroes and whites understood one another perfectly. Richardson predicted that the Negro would make outstanding contributions to the world some day in both social and religious fields. A description of Louisiana's

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<sup>94</sup>Ibid.

<sup>95</sup>News item in the Central State Life [Mt. Pleasant] , July 5, 1931.

<sup>96</sup>News item in the Central State Life [Mt. Pleasant] , July 5, 1931.

educational system for Negroes was included in this address.<sup>97</sup>

The third annual meeting of the Michigan County School Commissioners Association met in August of 1931 at Central State Teachers College and E. S. Richardson gave one of the major addresses on August 11 during the four day meet.<sup>98</sup>

E. C. Warriner, President of Central State Teachers College, lauded the work done by Superintendent Richardson during his stay in Michigan during the summer of 1931. A letter of thanks and appreciation was written to J. B. Snell, President of the Webster Parish School Board.

Honorable J. B. Snell  
Minden, Louisiana  
Dear Mr. Snell:

Your superintendent, Mr. E. S. Richardson with his wife and daughter, left Mt. Pleasant this morning on their long journey back to Minden.

I am writing to express our thanks and appreciation to you and your Board of Education for granting Mr. Richardson this leave of absence to enable him to come to Mt. Pleasant. He has done a remarkable piece of work here. His delightful personality, his force of character and devotion to the cause of better schools for rural boys and girls have won him a place in our college and in Michigan.

The extraordinary exhibit he had with him of the schools of Webster Parish has shown us in Michigan how rural schools should be carried on.

Mr. Richardson leaves behind him the good will of all of us and I wanted you to know how much we appreciated his stay here.

Yours truly,  
E.C. WARRINER, Pres.<sup>99</sup>

Walter F. Gries, County Commissioner of Schools in Marquette County, wrote Superintendent Richardson expressing his appreciation for contributions made:

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<sup>97</sup>News item in the Beaverton Clarion, July 17, 1931.

<sup>98</sup>Official Program of the Third Annual Meeting of Michigan County School Commissioners Association held at Central State Teachers College, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, August 10-13, 1931.

<sup>99</sup>News item in the Signal-Tribune [Minden] August 16, 1931.

Supt. E. S. Richardson  
 Supt. of Schools  
 Webster Parish  
 Minden, Louisiana  
 My dear Supt. Richardson:

Please accept my deepest appreciation for the splendid contribution you made to the program of the Michigan County School Commissioners' Association at Mt. Pleasant last week.

I realize that it undoubtedly meant special planning on your part to remain for the program, and the Commissioners of Michigan are very appreciative of the splendid address you made.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Very cordially yours,  
 /s/Walter F. Gries  
 County Comm'r of Schools<sup>100</sup>

When Superintendent Richardson returned to Webster Parish, he prepared a brochure of clippings, pictures and related information of rural school conditions in various states, gathered during his visit to Mt. Pleasant. He presented this brochure to the President and members of the Webster Parish School Board on September 1, 1931. In a letter on the opening pages of the brochure, Richardson stated:

It has been my desire for a long number of years to be given an opportunity to make a personal investigation of true conditions especially as related to country children in the wealthier states. I only wish that you and every citizen of Webster Parish and Louisiana could have seen what I have seen and heard what I have heard. The evidence of the superiority of our school system to me has been overwhelmingly proven.

I am proud to report to you that the school system of Louisiana is considered by sophisticated school authorities in other states as being the most efficient of all the states. The reason for its superiority is that it contemplates a uniform tax rate for education, contains a minimum amount of politics, and at the same time does not discriminate against the country child.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>Letter from Walter F. Gries to E. S. Richardson, August 19, 1931.

<sup>101</sup>Letter from E. S. Richardson to the President and members of the Webster Parish School Board, September 1, 1931.



The brochure contained an extensive description of the educational conditions observed from Minden, Louisiana to Central State Teachers College in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, and back to Minden, Louisiana. In company with Mrs. Richardson and his daughter Ruth, Superintendent Richardson left Minden early on the morning of June 20, 1931, and traveled a total of 4,500 miles in eight weeks. The trip was purposefully made in a leisurely manner in order to make studies of one- and two-room school conditions. In addition to what he saw, Richardson talked to many school men and citizens on prevailing school conditions in their respective communities. Items noted included location of school plants, sizes of taxing units, ability to support schools, distance between schools, proximity of one-room schools to larger centers, size of sites, condition of toilets, equipment and lighting. Most of the schools observed during Richardson's journey were so near the highway that they could have easily been converted into filling stations without moving them from their locations. The route covered was through the states of Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and Michigan.<sup>102</sup>

Photographs taken during the trip pointed out the long periods of time that school districts had prevailed with no change. One-room wooden structures were in use that had existed for more than fifty years. The outhouses were depicted by Richardson as "bug houses." In his brochure, with pictures showing typical "bug houses" observed on the tour, Richardson had this to say:

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<sup>102</sup>Brochure prepared for President and Members of the Webster Parish School Board, September, 1931.

There lurks in the average surface one-room school toilet, germs that destroy the moral and physical being. Shall we in the rural sections continue to force adolescent boys and girls to such exposure? Definite positive supervision of these necessary adjuncts is imperative. This problem alone should challenge the best efforts of the church and P.T.A.<sup>103</sup>

Richardson noted particularly that greater care was given in Michigan to barn construction than to school house construction. Individuals were spending considerably more money for constructing barns to care for livestock, than communities were spending for school houses to care for children. This greatly disturbed Mr. Richardson and he used every opportunity to point this problem out to leading citizens and educators.

Mr. Richardson believed that the changing times made it imperative that the district system of school administration be changed to a county system of administration. He felt that the ultra-democratic idea of government was blocking progress in improving school conditions. In his brochure he gave a very pointed interpretation of his philosophy toward change in school administration.

May the time soon come when society will be far more interested in the welfare of the child than being so vitally concerned about the ultra-democratic form of school government. When our law makers and educational leaders give a wider interpretation to the meaning of democracy, educationally, when they interpret its meaning in terms of the state's responsibility to the child, then and then only, will all the children of all the people of our state be given equal educational opportunities at minimum cost.<sup>104</sup>

Well after school was progressing again in Webster Parish during the fall of 1931, another letter was received by the President of Webster Parish School Board, praising the contributions of Richardson at Central State Teachers College.

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid.

CENTRAL STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE  
Department of College Extension  
Mount Pleasant, Michigan  
October 8, 1931

Maurice L. Smith, Director  
Henrietta Kaminske, Secretary

Mr. J. B. Snell  
Board of Education  
Minden, Louisiana  
My dear Mr. Snell:

For some time I have been planning to write to you, telling you about the excellent service given to us by Mr. E. S. Richardson, your superintendent whom you very kindly allowed to come to us this past summer. Every summer we have tried to get some outstanding individual to address the commissioners of the state and to instruct the commissioners' class throughout our summer school session. This summer we chose Superintendent Richardson and were very happy in our choice. We are very much pleased with his services and hope to have him with us again if you can see your way clear to allow him to come. In a recent conversation with President Warriner of this institution he told me Mr. Richardson had earned his salary before he had been here the first two weeks. We have never before had a man who has brought such inspiration to us in a manner so thoroughly energetic and so thoroughly helpful as Mr. Richardson has done. We greatly appreciate his services and hope that his success with you and with us will continue. I am

Very truly yours,  
/s/ M. L. Smith  
Rural Education<sup>105</sup>

Did Richardson create interest for better schools in Michigan?

On February 1, 1932, the Marquette County School News carried an editorial on school costs. Considerable space was given in the editorial to a previous article from another paper.<sup>106</sup> This article, entitled "Rural Schools Cost Too Much," was a brief report made by Commissioner C. C. Clark of Wexford County at his biennial school officers' meeting a month earlier. The editorial praised Commissioner Clark for his ability and fearlessness in handling matters of school consolidation that was not

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<sup>105</sup>Letter from M. L. Smith to J. B. Snell, October 8, 1931.

<sup>106</sup>Editorial in the Marquette County School News, February 1, 1932.

always too popular. In his article he compared the schools of Wexford county, Michigan to those found in Webster Parish, Louisiana.

In his report, "Rural Schools Cost Too Much," Clark compared the high cost of the administration of school affairs in Michigan to the lower cost in Louisiana. Facts and figures from Webster Parish were matched with those in Wexford County for the year 1929-30. Commissioner Clark's comparison revealed that more taxable wealth was available in Wexford County, more taxes were being paid, and per pupil educational cost was higher. He then compared the two school systems and found that Webster Parish had a superior system in every respect. About this situation Clark said,

Why is it that Webster seems to be getting more value than Wexford for less money? If our neighbor can buy at better coat for \$15.00 than we can buy for \$20.00, we investigate. Why not do the same thing with our schools. After making a careful study of their school system along with similar systems in other states, I am of the opinion that a large part of their efficiency is due to centralization of authority. Instead of having 192 school offices as we now have in Wexford, they have eight. Instead of having 59 independent school systems, they have one.<sup>107</sup>

Commissioner Clark continued his comparison to Webster Parish, Louisiana, in every respect, pointing out deficiencies even to the individual schools. He pointed out that similar deficiencies in Wexford were found in every county in Michigan. Relating to the early history of the district unit of education, Clark stated:

We borrowed the idea of the district system from Massachusetts a hundred years ago and in those days of isolation and of cost transportation it was satisfactory, but Massachusetts abandoned that system some 40 years ago

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<sup>107</sup>Ibid.

while Michigan, in company with numerous other states, still persists in retaining a system that is out of date, inefficient, and above all very expensive.<sup>108</sup>

Closing his report, Clark drove home his hope and desire:

I hope to see the time when every child and every taxpayer in the state will have equal rights and that time will come when public officials, including commissioners of schools, have nerve enough to acquaint the public with the facts.<sup>109</sup>

It is believed by the writer that Richardson had profound influence for better educational opportunities in numerous states and counties of which little written evidence was available. It is a known fact that Pulaski<sup>110</sup> and Columbia<sup>111</sup> counties in Arkansas were patterned after Webster Parish School System. Delegation after delegation came from various counties in Texas to observe the county unit administration in operation.<sup>112</sup> Delegations came from Oklahoma as well as from within the State of Louisiana.<sup>113</sup>

What were the impressions that these delegations took with them as they left Webster Parish, Louisiana? Dr. L. V. Cavins, Director of Research, West Virginia Department of Education, was tremendously impressed, for he said,

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<sup>108</sup>Ibid.      <sup>109</sup>Ibid.

<sup>110</sup>News item in the Shreveport Journal, February 11, 1932.

<sup>111</sup>News item in the Signal-Tribune [Minden] , November 19, 1935.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., March 9, 1932.

<sup>113</sup>News item in Louisiana Schools, XII, February, 1935, 49.

I left Webster Parish with the feeling that I would like to take it with me. I believe it would do for West Virginia, or any other state, the things that Mr. Richardson claims it has done for Webster Parish.<sup>114</sup>

Even though Superintendent Richardson continued his crusade for more compact and efficient school administration until he completed his service as superintendent in Webster Parish, it is believed that his last major address on this subject was made in Monticello, Arkansas, on November 4, 1932. The address, entitled, "Economic and Spiritual Waste in Education" was made before the Southeast Arkansas Educational Association. In his address, Richardson emphasized the urgency for change in the educational systems throughout America. Many of the schools in Arkansas as in other sections of the country had been closed due to financial conditions. Richardson challenged educators to set new educational objectives and in turn effect educational reorganization.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup>Dr. L. V. Cavins, "Impressions of Webster Parish Schools," Louisiana Schools, (March, 1933), 25-28.

<sup>115</sup>E. S. Richardson, "Economic and Spiritual Waste in Education," address delivered before the Southeast Arkansas Educational Association, Monticello, Arkansas, November 4, 1932.

## CHAPTER VI

### EDWIN SANDERS RICHARDSON AS PRESIDENT OF LOUISIANA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE (1936-1941)

For sixteen years Edwin Sanders Richardson had worked tirelessly developing the Webster Parish School System. While developing this system, he worked through his professional organizations to improve educational conditions in Louisiana and on a national basis. These efforts did not go unnoticed, for on August 14, 1936, State Superintendent T. H. Harris recommended that Superintendent E. S. Richardson of Webster Parish be elected President of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, succeeding G. W. Bond who had resigned in June to attend Columbia University.<sup>1</sup> Harris, in making his recommendation, stated that in his judgement Richardson was splendidly equipped to fill the position. After reviewing Richardson's record, Harris stated:

Superintendent Richardson has demonstrated that he is a highly successful executive and is capable of administering the affairs of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute in a highly satisfactory manner and I believe his selection will be acceptable to the various elements in Louisiana that are interested in the college.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Harris' recommendation was unanimously adopted by the State Board of Education.

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<sup>1</sup>"Official Proceedings of the State Board of Education, Baton Rouge," August 14, 1936.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

The Webster Parish School Board met in special session on August 18, 1936 to accept the resignation of their superintendent of sixteen years.<sup>3</sup> In a special tribute to Superintendent Richardson the Signal-Tribune of Minden published an editorial, entitled, "A Few Lines to Tech." This editorial possibly summarized the sentiment of the people of Webster Parish.

E. S. Richardson, for 16 years superintendent of the school system of our parish, has resigned to accept the position of president of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute at Ruston. We are glad and proud that we as a parish of the State of Louisiana are able to give a man such as President Richardson when called to an important office. We are sorry, too, because we believe his absence will be felt deeply, that his guiding personality will be a distinct loss to Webster parish and especially to our fine school system.

President Richardson was a pioneer in his field, that of education. He fought for the small rural school, he fought valiantly against the peril of disease, his wish was that the small schools should be given the same chance as the larger ones, and he succeeded in his aim. He was an ardent believer in the printed word, books and the library. He became nationally famous for his knowledge of parish-wide cooperative libraries. All people, young and old, white and black alike, are served today in a cooperative Rosenwald Library set-up in Webster Parish. President Richardson was also a lover of beautiful things. He launched a successful campaign upon beautification of school buildings and grounds.

As President Richardson leaves the parish he leaves a clean record behind him. The parish school system is completely out of debt and the board paid seven and one-half per cent bonus to all employees.

The material accomplishments of this man are enough to cover three pages of type. His usefulness, his strength of character, his ability, his courage, his sympathetic nature, his personality are the important things to us now. The memories left by a man who gave 16 years of his life to the cause of enlightenment, power, and knowledge in Webster parish.

Tech, we give you E. S. Richardson, a worthy product of Webster parish, a man of quality, stability, and common sense.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>News item in the Signal-Tribune [Minden] , August 18, 1936.

<sup>4</sup>Editorial in the Signal-Tribune [Minden] , August 18, 1936.



Immediately after the election of Edwin Sanders Richardson as Louisiana Polytechnic Institute's ninth president, hundreds of messages expressing congratulations poured into the office of the new president. Congratulatory expressions were so numerous that President Richardson's office staff was busy for several weeks writing acknowledgements to telegrams, letters, and telephone calls.<sup>5</sup>

H. H. White, President of the State Board of Education, wrote a letter to Richardson the day after his election, expressing confidence in his ability to do a good job in the new position.<sup>6</sup> White stated, "I am aware of the strong personality, business ability and knowledge of men and conditions which have made you so successful as Superintendent of Schools first in Bienville and then in Webster Parish, and I believe that you can succeed equally well in the management of the L.P.I. at Ruston." A footnote further stated: "I am further gratified that the election came without solicitation on your part. I had many requests from various parties to support them for the position, all of which I declined."

Other letters of a similar nature were received from John E. Cox, John M. Foote, Parrish Fuller, C. C. Henson, Charles F. Trudeau, Dr. M. E. Dodd, Dr. A. L. Crabb, A. C. Lewis, Dr. Homer Garrett, J. W. Brouillette, and many others.<sup>7</sup>

Louisiana Schools paid tribute to E. S. Richardson as Louisiana Polytech's new head in the September, 1936 issue.<sup>8</sup> The publication of the

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<sup>5</sup>Welcome Edition of the Ruston Daily Leader, August 28, 1936.

<sup>6</sup>Letter from H. H. White to President E. S. Richardson, August 15, 1936.

<sup>7</sup>Congratulatory letters to E. S. Richardson from files of E. S. Richardson.

<sup>8</sup>"Louisiana Polytech's New President," Louisiana Schools, XIV (September, 1936), 13-14.

Louisiana Teachers Association sketched Richardson's educational experiences and also praised him as "one of the Association's great servants." The tribute went on to extend words of recognition to the new president's helpmate as follows:

We expect that if the truth were known that a great measure of Mr. Richardson's success is found in the fact that in early years he married a very charming woman. She has been truly a good wife and helpmate throughout his life. She has stood by him when conditions were good and when conditions were bad. She has been a good mother to their children and is still young in outlook and in spirit. It must have been a source of great pride to her to feel that the Louisiana Polytechnic Institute called Mr. Richardson to come and head the institution in this time of need. Her contribution to his success has been great and will mean much to the development of the institution he will head.<sup>9</sup>

The article was concluded with a prediction that great things would happen under President Richardson's administration, "through the development and usefulness of that great school in the hills of North Louisiana."

Richardson had a philosophy professionally speaking that the job should come to the man. Before being elected to the presidency of Polytech, Richardson had stated numerous times that he was making no effort whatever to obtain the position. When he was first approached on the matter, he said, "I already have a job." It was with this philosophy that E. S. Richardson approached his new position as President of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute.<sup>10</sup>

When Richardson was interviewed following his election, he emphasized that the faculty of Louisiana Polytechnic would not be disturbed. He asserted that it would take time to find weak places in the teaching ranks

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> News item in the Shreveport Journal, August 14, 1936.

and that he would place all teachers and administrative staff members on their own merits from the beginning.<sup>11</sup>

President Richardson assumed charge of his new duties at Louisiana Tech on Monday, August 17, 1936. The Ruston Daily Leader on that day presented a picture on the front page with President Richardson bidding goodbye to George W. Bond, the retiring president. The news article also stated that the Richardson family would occupy the president's home on the campus as soon as some renovating had been done to the house.<sup>12</sup>

On Friday, August 28, 1936, the Ruston Daily Leader published a twenty page "Welcome Edition" honoring President E. S. Richardson. The entire edition was filled with welcome ads sponsored by business interests, citizens, educators, and officials over Louisiana. The headlines read, "City and Parish Honor E. S. Richardson." A large picture of President Richardson was placed on the first page with detailed information relating to his past educational accomplishments.<sup>13</sup>

The editorial in the Welcome Edition placed Richardson in high esteem.

Creating a spirit of co-operation never before equalled in the history of Louisiana Tech, E. S. Richardson has assumed the presidency of North Louisiana's senior state college. The selection of this famous educator by the State Board of Education is sufficient proof, if such were needed, that the men who have the responsibility of our educational institutions have the best interests of those institutions at heart. E. S. Richardson has become, in the short period of comparatively few years, one of the most outstanding school men in the nation. His advice and counsel has been requested by innumerable educational associations and institutions all over the United States. His record of accomplishing what he sets out to do, is proof of his ability.

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>News item in the Ruston Daily Leader, August 17, 1936.

<sup>13</sup>Welcome Edition, Ruston Daily Leader, August 28, 1936.

The history of this man's amazingly numerous activities attests to his energy, forcefulness and leadership. Under his guidance the school system of Webster Parish has become one of the most widely copied in the nation, and has received favorable comment in practically every educational publication. In 16 years, Mr. Richardson accomplished more in education in his home parish, than had been accomplished in any state previously.

The esteem held for Mr. Richardson by business men, bankers, educators and just plain citizens, from all walks of life is attested to by the hundreds upon hundreds of congratulatory telegrams and letters, not to mention telephone calls, upon his election as president of Tech.

The City of Ruston has every reason to be proud of Mr. Richardson's arrival here to become a citizen of this community. Every past action of his is an indication that his coming here will mean much to the city, the parish, Louisiana Tech and to the state.

We congratulate the State Board of Education upon their choice in selecting Ruston's number one citizen for the future.<sup>14</sup>

A huge reception was held honoring President Richardson on Friday night, August 28, at Tech Stadium. More than three hundred tickets were sold for the barbecue dinner served on tables on the west side of the stadium. Special invited guests included members of the State Board of Education, Lieutenant Governor Earl K. Long and some thirty-five members of the State Legislature.<sup>15</sup>

President Richardson spoke to the large gathering as the closing feature of the program. Promising a bigger and better Louisiana Tech under his administration, Richardson spoke briefly and straight from the shoulder. "We must not sit here like baby mocking birds and wait for the Legislature to pour worms into our mouth. I intend to ask them for it." Richardson, referring briefly to the importance of publicity for Louisiana Tech, stated, "We have one of the finest schools in the state here, let's tell the people about it."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>News item in the Ruston Daily Leader, August 29, 1936.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

In speaking of cooperation between faculty members, as well as alumni associations, Richardson pointed out that he would insist on such spirit. "You know in football that if the ball carrier doesn't have good interference, he won't get very far. I am asking the same sort of interference from you people for me and Tech. With it we will make this the greatest school in the state."<sup>17</sup>

State Superintendent T. H. Harris on September 3, 1936, wrote a letter to the Ruston Daily Leader expressing appreciation for the Friday, August 28th "Welcome Edition." The letter read as follows:

The Ruston Leader  
Ruston, Louisiana  
Gentlemen:

I wish to thank you for your issue of Friday, August 25th, extending a welcome to my friend, President E. S. Richardson.

The people of Ruston and the surrounding country have always been loyal in their support of L.P.I., but your reception of President Richardson was really beyond my expectations. It certainly warms the cockles of the heart to know that Tech is surrounded by such loyal friends. I am sure that President Richardson appreciates very deeply the cordial attitude of the community and it is my opinion that as president of the institution he will thoroughly justify all of your expressions of confidence and good will. I believe that he will prove a great president and that under his leadership L.P.I. will offer to the youth of Louisiana, and especially of North Louisiana, the college opportunities that they merit and that all of the work of the college will represent high standards.

Again assuring you of the appreciation of the State Board of Education and of myself as State Superintendent of Education of your cordial and enthusiastic reception extended to President Richardson, I am

Yours very truly,  
T. H. HARRIS  
State Superintendent  
of Education<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Letter from T. H. Harris to the Ruston Daily Leader, September 3, 1936.

During the second week of September 1936, T. H. Harris spoke before approximately eighty-five members of the Ruston Kiwanis Club and predicted an exceedingly bright future for Louisiana Polytechnic Institute under the leadership of newly elected President E. S. Richardson.<sup>19</sup> "I want to talk to you folks about Louisiana Tech," he began. "The institution has had a great history, and has done a world of good. Its instructions have been on a sound basis. . . . I think its future prospects are remarkably bright for several reasons. . . . first, because there are no better people in the world than we have in North Louisiana. The people up here are going to support Louisiana Tech . . . . Another reason why Tech will go forward is because it is my judgement that you have a good president. He knows education in Louisiana in all its phases. In every position he has filled he has done so with distinction."

Continuing his remarks about Richardson, Mr. Harris said, "He will take the bridle off his faculty, and let them run their departments as they should be run, feeling that they possibly will know more about it than he does. Under Mr. Richardson you are going to see something done at Tech. He's going to bring that institution into the minds of the people of this state."<sup>20</sup>

Closing his remarks, Superintendent Harris said, "I think we are fortunate in securing the services of this man as president of Tech. I don't recall any official act of my life that I feel prouder of than that I had something to do with bringing him here."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>News item in the Ruston Daily Leader, September 9, 1936.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

After the rousing welcome given President Richardson with the big barbecue in the new football stadium, he moved with his usual enthusiasm. Shortly after his arrival on campus, the old main building burned, leaving the campus without a desirable meeting place for college gatherings. On August 28, 1936, only two weeks after his election as Polytechnic president, the Finance Committee of the State Board of Education approved President Richardson's request for permission to build a temporary auditorium at a cost not to exceed \$3,600.00.<sup>22</sup> Richardson assured the committee that materials from the temporary building could be salvaged for use when it was no longer needed as an auditorium.

Within eleven days, the temporary building known as the Wigwam was built and ready for use when the fall semester opened on September 15. The new president stood on the stage of the temporary auditorium, and "as one freshman to another," ushered in the new year, instilling a spirit of cooperation in the beginning students and impressing them with endearment for the ideals of their future alma mater.<sup>23</sup>

During the next few months, a new refrigerating plant was completed as a valuable asset to the dining hall; additional showers and dressing rooms were placed in the stadium; extra bus routes were provided to transport students to Tech, many of them traveling more than fifty miles from their homes; a series of radio programs in the interests of Tech were broadcast from KWKH in Shreveport; improvements were made in the men's gymnasium, including the brick-veneering of the building and the addition

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<sup>22</sup>"Official Proceedings of the State Board of Education, Baton Rouge," December 19, 1936.

<sup>23</sup>News item in the Tech Talk [Louisiana Polytechnic Institute] , February 5, 1937.

of exercise rooms. An extensive landscaping program for the central part of the campus was also launched.<sup>24</sup>

President Richardson used every possible opportunity to relate to civic organizations the real value of education. He believed that the right job for every boy and girl was the hardest part of any educational course. Speaking to the local Kiwanis Club in Ruston on one occasion, he said, "Many young people are forced into lines of work and study for which they are not fitted. The selfish interest of parents or kin influence boys to enter specialized training for professional work when they are more fitted to do other forms of labor."<sup>25</sup> Richardson further pointed out that a student's mentality was not the only measure for determining the educational direction a student should travel. Great emphasis was placed on character and desire as further determining factors. President Richardson asked the Kiwanis Club members to help high school students find themselves and decide for themselves what sort of life work they should follow. He encouraged them to activate their vocational guidance committee and provide a much needed service to the boys and girls of the area.

Richardson also emphasized that there was a need for greater respect for the ordinary occupations of life. A farmer who applied himself and a girl who became the mother of a family was doing a service for humanity, just as citizens who joined other stations of life. "Let's give credit where credit is due--to the person who applies himself and does well the job he starts."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>News item in the Ruston Daily Leader, June 2, 1939.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.



## I. TRI-COLLEGE CONFERENCE

During the 1937 Louisiana Teachers Convention in Shreveport, the initial tri-college banquet was held. Students and friends of the three state senior colleges--Louisiana Tech, Louisiana Normal and Southwestern--participated. On October 28, 1938, President Richardson spoke during a radio broadcast from KWKH in Shreveport as a preliminary to the Tech-Normal banquet held in the Washington-Youree hotel. The Tech-Normal banquet was a friendly pre-game get-to-gether for the annual football game to be played on the following Saturday.<sup>27</sup> President Richardson's talk, entitled "College Conference Struck Pay Sand," outlined the results of the tri-college conference held less than a year earlier. "A little less than a year ago in this city at the Washington-Youree hotel there was assembled a representative group of administrators and teachers from Southwestern at Lafayette, the State Normal at Natchitoches and Louisiana Tech at Ruston. These colleges, as you know, are administered by the State Board of Education.

"At this meeting, college history was made. Cards were placed face-up, concessions and confessions were made. Hatchets and tomahawks were buried. All agreed as to financial needs and necessity for more adequate state support. With the past forgotten, coupled with the need for funds, we organized a state college campaign."

The group decided at this meeting that, since each of the schools had practically the same enrollment, they should share equally. In the past each college made out its own budget, lined up certain members of the

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<sup>27</sup>News item in the Tech Talk [Louisiana Polytechnic Institute] , October 21, 1938.

House and Senate to plead its cause. As a result, the Legislature developed into semi-hostile groups and none of the colleges were adequately taken care of. Due to this individual effort, naturally, an unwholesome spirit of rivalry was developed.<sup>28</sup>

Richardson's speech further pointed out that an agreement was reached for the colleges to unite and request the same appropriations for each. It was further agreed that a statewide campaign of education would be undertaken to inform the public of the existing situation. The people would be told about the lack of state support in the past, and how students were discriminated against in the matter of ordinary comforts on the respective campuses. The public would be informed about crowded classrooms, inadequate pay for teachers and the universal teacher shortage.<sup>29</sup>

The united active campaign was inaugurated and as a result of this effort a new day dawned for the three senior state colleges. The next Legislature appropriated without a nay vote \$425,000.00 for the maintenance of each institution. A bond issue of \$6,000,000.00 was passed for permanent buildings, opening the way for supplementary funds from the Public Works Administration.<sup>30</sup>

The united effort made possible an addition of twenty-seven new faculty members and the initiation of a \$2,000,000.00 building program for Louisiana Polytechnic Institute during the 1938-39 school year.<sup>31</sup>

Looking toward the football game to be played on Saturday following this address, Richardson closed his talk with the following remarks:

"We also agreed that nothing in the matter of athletic contests or political line-ups would break this bond of cooperation. A friendly, wholesome spirit was created at

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

this meeting that I hope will endure even through heated football contests. We also wish to recognize the friendly spirit that has been developed between the state and private colleges. We compete now for the job of friendly competition rather than from hate or prejudice. There should not be, and at present there is no malice or hate existing, believe it or not! This is illustrated by a joint banquet of the alumni that we are holding tonight with the State Normal College, and on Saturday at the Fair Grounds we expect to not let them cross our goal line! A feeling of understanding and good fellowship is necessary in education.<sup>32</sup>

## II. PROGRESS AT LOUISIANA TECH

During the presidency of Edwin Sanders Richardson, progress and growth was noted in every major area of the college. Progress was experienced through enrollment growth, increased financial assistance, faculty growth, and improved qualifications, development of additional schools, increased physical facilities, and Southern Association accreditation.

Enrollment figures indicate a growth of more than a thousand students as the college increased from a student population of 1,270 at the end of the session, 1935-36, to more than 2,300 students during the 1940-41 session. In 1937 the growth of the student body had been so great and financial support so inadequate, a campaign was organized to solicit from the State Legislature sufficient appropriations to allow additions to the faculty and physical facilities.<sup>33</sup>

Combined with efforts already initiated through the tri-college conference, President Richardson personally carried the needs of Tech to the people. An advocate of audio-visual aids, he resorted to the method of

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Report from E. S. Richardson to the Committee on Education of the State Board of Education, November 1, 1940, p. 5.

using a camera to make pictures of the unfortunate conditions around Tech campus. Pictures were made of the old dilapidated frame buildings, inadequate sidewalks, and poor classroom facilities. The pictures in turn were put on lantern slides for use in the stereopticon, before the use of the modern two-by-two colored slides. These stereopticon slides were used by Mr. Richardson to accompany his talks at various gatherings in North Louisiana. He constantly went to towns and villages, meeting in church buildings, meeting with Civic Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs and Parent-Teacher Associations. He used every opportunity that would avail itself to him to sell Louisiana Polytech and its needs. Considerable pressure was built up in the Legislature to provide the much needed funds.<sup>34</sup>

State appropriations for Louisiana Polytechnic Institute increased from \$224,152.50 during the 1935-36 school session to \$545,000.00 for the 1940-41 session.<sup>35</sup> Additional funds were secured for construction purposes of which the Public Works Administration of the federal government supplied \$878,601.00 and the State of Louisiana appropriated approximately \$1,155,076.00. From these funds, seven new buildings were constructed. On December 19, 1938, ground was broken preparatory to building a new dormitory for women, the first of the seven new buildings. Buildings constructed during President Richardson's administration included a fine arts and dramatics building named Howard Auditorium, a dining hall, a women's dormitory named Aswell Hall, a men's dormitory named Robinson Hall, an

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<sup>34</sup>Interview with R. H. Mount, retired head of audio-visual education at Tech, February 10, 1965.

<sup>35</sup>"Report from E. S. Richardson to the Committee on Education of the State Board of Education," November 1, 1940, p. 6.

engineering building named Bogard Hall, an agricultural laboratory, and a new power plant and laundry.<sup>36</sup>

Commenting upon the financial assistance that made the expansion program possible, E. S. Richardson on March 3, 1939 had the following to say:

The student body, the alumni, the faculty and all those interested in the future of Louisiana Tech are under lasting obligations to Governor Richard W. Leche, the senate and the house of representatives, who hold the unique position of granting our requests in full.<sup>37</sup>

Only a short time following Richardson's comments, a letter was received by him from F. C. Haley, principal of the Summerfield High School and graduate of Louisiana Tech. The letter read, in part, as follows:

According to the papers you have succeeded in getting more than two million dollars appropriation on a building program for Louisiana Tech. The purpose of this letter is to congratulate you on this great achievement. I for one realize that it takes great effort to accomplish something similar to the program you have undertaken. Also according to the papers, some of those buildings will be named after some of the most noted educators that have done great service for Tech. I think that one of the most important new structures should be called Richardson Hall after the man that really started the ball to rolling.<sup>38</sup>

However, Legislative restrictions prevented the naming of public buildings for living personalities at this time.

President Richardson extended an invitation to the public to attend an "open house" on Tech campus for Sunday afternoon, October 29, 1939.<sup>39</sup> He emphasized that the affair was not a formal dedication or official

<sup>36</sup>Program of Dedication of New Buildings, Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, February 22, 1941.

<sup>37</sup>News item in the Ruston Daily Leader, March 3, 1939.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., March 16, 1939.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., October 28, 1939.

opening. He directed his invitation to "Mr. Average Man" who did not ordinarily attend such functions. Richardson was particularly interested in having the visitor see the two modern dormitories, the president's home, the home economics cottage and the large dining hall. Of course, the visitors would be able to view other visible signs of progress as the \$2,000,000.00 construction program was in full swing at that time.

The closing remarks of an editorial in the Ruston Daily Leader stated,

There will be punch served, the president says, just like anybody's open house and he will be there with his teachers to welcome the hundreds of friends and interested parents from this entire section where the institution draws the thousands of boys and girls seeking the way to a better life.<sup>40</sup>

The popularity of President Richardson was certainly at a high point on November 4, 1939, during the annual homecoming festivities. The float that won first prize in the homecoming parade was entered by the senior class and presented President Richardson in life-size picture facing each direction from the float. Above the picture in large boxcar letters was the word "PROGRESS." During special homecoming ceremonies, Mayor Sam Caldwell of Shreveport, as president of the Alumni Association, presented a framed plaque to President Richardson. The plaque embodied resolutions passed by the Association on October 27, 1939, expressing confidence, support, and loyalty to the Tech president.<sup>41</sup>

Whereas: Our President, Dr. E. S. Richardson, through his untiring efforts has brought about the following accomplishments for Alma Mater:

The organization of Alumni Units wherever possible;  
The molding of favorable sentiment and greater esteem for the institution as a whole;

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<sup>40</sup>Editorial in the Ruston Daily Leader, October 28, 1939.

<sup>41</sup>News item in the Tech Talk [Louisiana Polytechnic Institute] , November 10, 1939.

The raising of the scholastic standards of the institution;  
 The increasing of the student enrollment;  
 The bringing about of a feeling of cooperation among faculty,  
 student body, patrons and public;  
 And finally, the securing of funds and administering the  
 building program which is nearing completion, thereby adding  
 very materially to the accommodation of our student body,  
 and providing better educational facilities for those in  
 attendance and for those who may enter later;

Therefore, Be it Resolved:

That we extend, in the name of the Alumni Association, our  
 sincere thanks and expression of confidence in his leader-  
 ship; and pledge to him our most loyal support in his further  
 effort to make for us a still greater Tech;

Be it further resolved that these resolutions be framed and  
 formally presented to President Richardson at our Homecoming  
 on November 4, 1939.

Offered and unanimously adopted, in a meeting of the board  
 of director's representing the entire Alumni Association of  
 Louisiana Polytechnic Institute on October 27, 1939.

D. G. Armstrong

(Signed) Sam S. Caldwell<sup>42</sup>

SECRETARY

PRESIDENT<sup>42</sup>

On February 22, 1941 at 11:00 a. m., dedication of the seven new  
 buildings was held in Howard Auditorium. Dr. Pierce Cline, President of  
 Centenary College, delivered the principal address of the special dedica-  
 tion program. Prior to the dedication ceremonies, a two-hour tour of all  
 new facilities was held for friends of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute.<sup>43</sup>

In April of 1938, the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary  
 Schools placed Louisiana Polytechnic Institute on probation.<sup>44</sup> On April 30,  
 1938, O. C. Carmichael, Chairman of the Association, wrote to President  
 Richardson stating:

The Committee on Reports was very favorably impressed  
 in its frank discussion with you and other members of your

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<sup>42</sup>Resolutions passed by the Tech Alumni Association on October 27,  
 1939 and presented to President E. S. Richardson on November 4, 1939 by  
 Sam S. Caldwell.

<sup>43</sup>News item in the Shreveport Journal, February 20, 1941.

<sup>44</sup>News item in the Tech Talk [Louisiana Polytechnic Institute] May 1,  
 1938.

staff. The committee feels that your difficulties are due largely to the rapid growth of your institution and to the extensive offering of technical courses. It hopes that the Legislature of Louisiana will recognize that you are in serious financial difficulties and that it will make material increases in annual appropriations to enable Louisiana Polytechnic Institute to take adequate care of the student body, and to permit the return of the institution to good standing in the Association.<sup>45</sup>

The letter from O. C. Carmichael listed specific reasons for placing Louisiana Polytechnic on probation as follows: small expenditures for the library; low educational expenditure per student; heavy teaching loads, both in size of classes and excessive hours; lack of training of the faculty; inadequate appropriations for the student body and the program of the institution.

The Student Body Association of Louisiana Tech summed the situation up like this:

Tech must have more money appropriated by the state. Students keep coming to Tech in increasing numbers and they cannot be turned away. Yet, how can a college be expected to accomodate 1,511 students with virtually the same facilities that were available for 957 students five years ago? A college cannot be expected to do it. The association officials don't expect it and you can't blame them. The Student Body Association closed their plea for funds by placing the needs at the doors of the legislature. It's up to the legislature to get us off probation.<sup>46</sup>

With the aid of the students, alumni, and many of the state's leading newspapers and organizations, an intensive drive was put on for increased funds. Growing Pains, a bulletin prepared by a faculty committee at the request of President Richardson, told the story of critical needs to the public. On the opening page of the bulletin, the committee stated,

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<sup>45</sup>Letter from O. C. Carmichael to E. S. Richardson, April 30, 1938.

<sup>46</sup>News item in the Shreveport Journal, May 23, 1938.



After the examination of the institution's condition, we have diagnosed the case as 'Growing Pains.' The ailment is one of long standing; but it can be cured if treatment is started at an early date. It will take money--funds appropriated by the Louisiana Legislature--before the agony can be abated and the college restored to good health.<sup>47</sup>

The report placed emphasis on the major parts of the college which needed immediate remedy. Needs were pointed out in every major area of the college. Invariably the story was the same. Problems were due to increased enrollments and lack of funds to meet this increase.<sup>48</sup>

In March 1939, another bulletin was prepared at the request of President Richardson, for the purpose of answering all the criticisms of the Southern Association for the previous year. The bulletin, entitled "Today at Louisiana Polytechnic Institute," refuted all of the criticisms for which the school had been placed on probation.<sup>49</sup>

Armed with copies of the thirty-two page bulletin, President Richardson went to the Memphis, Tennessee meeting of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The bulletin presented very vividly the progress of the college during the year of probation.

On April 27, 1939, the Committee on Reports of the Southern Association recommended that the probation of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute be suspended.<sup>50</sup> However, Tech was still placed on a starred list and given some minor deficiencies to work on. The committee reports to Louisiana

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<sup>47</sup>Growing Pains, XXXV (February, 1938), 35 pp.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Today at Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, a bulletin printed by Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, March, 1939. 32 pp.

<sup>50</sup>Letter from Committee on Reports to E. S. Richardson, April 27, 1939.

Tech closed with the following comments: "The Committee commends the administration of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute for the splendid progress during the year, and hopes that still further improvement will be noted another year."

Numerous congratulatory letters poured into the office of President Richardson for the fast effective action taken to remove Louisiana Polytech from probation. M. C. Huntley, Executive Secretary of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools wrote, "Please let me congratulate you on being able to improve your situation to such an extent the Association felt the probation should not be maintained. I am sure that in another year you will lift the 'star'."<sup>51</sup>

J. E. Keeny of Pineville, former president of Louisiana Tech wrote, "From first to last, your handling of the 'accreditation situation' has been fine. Congratulations!"<sup>52</sup>

Dr. J. Leon Clark, president of Southeastern Louisiana College at Hammond wrote, "Let me congratulate you upon your noble work in having Louisiana Polytechnic Institute reinstated in the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. I thought that if Tech was not put back on the accredited list that it would be no fault of yours. The people of Louisiana should be indeed grateful for the stalwart fight that you made in that connection for Tech. Best wishes for your continued success."<sup>53</sup>

A maximum effort was continued through the 1939-40 school year to remove further deficiencies that the Southern Association had criticized.

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<sup>51</sup>Letter from M. C. Huntley to E. S. Richardson, April 27, 1939.

<sup>52</sup>Letter from J. E. Keeny to E. S. Richardson, May 1, 1939.

<sup>53</sup>Letter from Dr. Leon Clark to E. S. Richardson, May 2, 1939.

On April 12, 1940, a telegram was received from President Richardson who was in attendance at the annual meeting of the Southern Association. The telegram stated that Tech had been taken back into the fold "without any strings attached."<sup>54</sup>

While building up the standards of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute to meet the requirements of the Southern Association, the general qualifications of the faculty were decidedly improved. By the end of the administration of President Richardson all departments were headed by people with the Master's degree, or above. The faculty experienced a growth in total size from sixty-seven members during the 1935-36 school session to 121 members in the 1940-41 session. Faculty members holding Doctor's degrees increased from six, or 8.95 per cent of the total faculty size in the 1935-36 school session, to eighteen, or 14.8 per cent of the total faculty size in the 1940-41 session. Faculty members holding Master's degrees increased from thirty-eight, or 56.72 per cent of the total faculty size in the 1935-36 session, to eighty-two, or 67.176 per cent of the total faculty size in the 1940-41 session. Faculty members holding Bachelor's degrees decreased from twenty-three, or 34.33 per cent of the total faculty size in the 1935-36 session to twenty-one, or 17.35 per cent of the total faculty size in the 1940-41 session.<sup>55</sup>

Growth of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute indicated that the academic organization should be changed from the original three schools of Arts and Sciences, Education, and Engineering. The schools of Agriculture and Business Administration were separated from Arts and Sciences, and the school of Home Economics was organized separately from Education. During

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<sup>54</sup>News item in the Ruston Daily Leader, April 12, 1940.

<sup>55</sup>"Report from E. S. Richardson to the Committee on Education of the State Board of Education," November 1, 1940, p. 7.

the 1940-41 school session Louisiana Polytechnic Institute administered its educational responsibilities through six separate organized schools, namely Agriculture, Arts and Sciences, Education, Engineering, Home Economics and Business Administration.<sup>56</sup>

### III. DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE

When E. S. Richardson arrived on the Tech campus in August of 1936 about sixty students were enrolled in Agriculture. The agricultural courses were being taught in the basement of Leche Hall. Richardson had been president of Tech for only a week when he called R. L. Reese, Head of the Department of Agriculture, into conference. It was decided that the Department of Agriculture should either be developed or discontinued. At that time the college did not own an acre of land under cultivation. It owned a small herd of dairy cattle, about ten acres of grazing land, a small antiquated dairy barn, a few unsightly sheds and pens, and a small herd of swine which were kept for the purpose of consuming the garbage from the dining hall. These barns, sheds and pig-pens were located only a few hundred yards from the boys' dormitory, the president's home, and the football stadium on the west end of the campus. They were an eye-sore and constituted a public health problem. There were no college funds available for making needed improvements.<sup>57</sup>

In spite of financial difficulties, it was decided to develop the Department of Agriculture. A decision was made to try and enlist some out-

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Memorandum from R. L. Reese, Dean of Agriculture to President E. S. Richardson, October 28, 1940.

aid from public spirited friends, instead of waiting two years for another session of the Legislature. Results were forthcoming, for in a year's time the use of a two hundred and fifty acre farm had been obtained and a modern dairy barn constructed. The money for construction purposes had been secured from friends of Tech and arrangements were made to purchase the land at a later date with state money with no increase in price. An additional one hundred and fifty acres of land was secured by varied other arrangements to fulfill an expanding need. The city of Ruston cooperated by building a six-inch water line and a 2400 volt power line to the property at no cost to the state. The Peoples' Gas and Power Company constructed a three-inch gas line to the farm also.<sup>58</sup>

When the 1940-41 school session opened, the Agriculture Department had been developed into a School of Agriculture and the enrollment had grown to well over two hundred students. The physical facilities included seven major buildings and five minor buildings located on four hundred acres of land. The teaching staff had grown from one member in 1936 to four full time members in 1940. Among the facilities was a two-story modern Agriculture classroom and laboratory building, well equipped for teaching purposes. Included among other things was a dairy laboratory where about 2,600 bottles of milk were pasteurized, cooled and bottled each day, and where about one hundred and fifty gallons of ice-cream and two hundred pounds of butter were produced each week. All of these products were consumed on the college campus.<sup>59</sup>

Dean Reese closed his report to President Richardson with the following statements:

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

In summarizing, let me say, beginning with very little when you came here in 1936, the Department now comprises 400 acres of land in use, an enrollment of over 200 students each year, a staff of 4 full-time teachers, about 125 head of pure-bred Jersey and Holstein cattle, a small herd of 30 beef cattle, and about 100 head of swine. The investment in buildings, land, and other improvements is in the neighborhood of about \$175,000.

We have laid a foundation upon which a very creditable School of Agriculture is being built to serve the needs of farm boys in the north section of the State.<sup>60</sup>

#### IV. SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Inasmuch as the School of Arts and Sciences was in large measure a service division for the rest of the college, the greatest progress actually took place with the increased staff size to meet the needs of the increased enrollment. Considerable progress took place in various departments within the School of Arts and Sciences. The Departments of Art, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, English, Foreign Language, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, and Social Sciences gained a number of additional teachers. In reality the teaching force in the School of Arts and Sciences was practically doubled within the first four years of Richardson's administration.<sup>61</sup>

In a report to President Richardson on October 29, 1940, Herbert L. Hughes, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, enumerated the tangible evidences of progress and then turned to other evidences just as real though less obvious.<sup>62</sup> These intangible evidences of progress were mentioned as follows:

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>"Report from Dean Herbert L. Hughes to President E. S. Richardson," October 29, 1940.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

At present our teaching staff gives more attention than formerly to the matters of writing, editing, and research, though the rapid increase in enrollment has kept teachers too busy with classroom teaching to do as much of this as we hope for in the future. However, the larger percentage of teachers trained in the methods of research should and does mean an increased interest in research on the part of the staff as a whole.

Dean Hughes noted in his report that increased opportunities were afforded deans and instructors to attend the meetings of their professional organizations. These opportunities were made possible by more ample departmental budgets as well as encouragement from the President, Deans, and Heads of Departments. More of the teachers than formerly were holding memberships in honorary and scholarship societies and more of them than formerly had parts on the programs of these organizations.<sup>63</sup>

Dean Hughes completed his report by stating:

For the reasons I have given, I feel that the School of Arts and Sciences of Tech has made very substantial and notable progress since you became president of Tech, and I hope that as the college goes on to consolidate its gains, the School of Arts and Sciences may be able to make even greater progress.<sup>64</sup>

#### V. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND ECONOMICS

In order to merge closely related subjects, the Department of Commerce and the Division of Economics in the Social Science Department were incorporated in August 1940, into the School of Business Administration and Economics.<sup>65</sup>

The Commerce Department, as of August 1936, enrolled approximately

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid.      <sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>"Report from Dean Amos W. Ford to President E. S. Richardson," October 31, 1940.

205 students and had only two teachers, one of whom taught accounting, and the other shorthand and typewriting. The Economics Division was in the Social Science Department and students enrolled in the Commerce Department went to the Social Science Department to obtain their required courses in economics. The enrollment in the Commerce Department grew during the four intervening years, as did the number of students who wished to major in economics. In October 1940, the School of Business Administration and Economics reported an enrollment of 485 students, with a net increase in four years of 485 students, with a net increase in four years of 280 students, with a net increase in four years of 280 students, or 137 per cent. This increase in enrollment necessitated the expansion of the faculty to seven full time teachers and one part-time teacher. Whereas in the spring of 1936 there were seventeen students who obtained their degree in the field of commerce, there were sixty senior candidates for the 1940-41 school session.<sup>66</sup>

The School of Business Administration and Economics was offering four curricula during the 1940-41 session. The curricula offered were secretarial training, accounting, general commerce, and economics.<sup>67</sup> It was reported in October 1940, by Dean Amos W. Ford, that "No graduate of this division during the past four years is now unemployed."

## VI. SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

A decrease was noted in the enrollment of the School of Education during the administration of E. S. Richardson. It was believed that this

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.



could have been caused by the elimination of teachers' certificates on the basis of two and three years of college training. Another factor might have been that many of the students who qualified to teach did not enroll in the School of Education, but in the school of their major study, going to the School of Education only for such work as would qualify them for teachers' certificates to meet the requirements of the State Department of Education, which were considerably lower than the requirements of Tech's School of Education. Even though the enrollment in the School of Education showed a decline, in reality the classes were larger and more students were being served.<sup>68</sup>

During the summer of 1939 a program of visual education was added to the School of Education through which moving pictures and slides were used in the classrooms of the entire college and in the training school. Louisiana Polytechnic Institute was one of the first colleges in the state to inaugurate such a program. Through Mr. Jasper Ewing of New Orleans, President Richardson learned of Mr. R. H. Mount's interest in this type of program. Mount was brought to Polytech during the first summer of the program as a visiting instructor. He was re-hired on a permanent basis in the fall and it became his responsibility to develop a program of visual education for Louisiana Tech.<sup>69</sup>

An outstanding feature of the teacher training program worked out during Richardson's presidency was an arrangement that secured cooperation with the parish school officials for practice teaching in the high school

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<sup>68</sup>"Report from E. S. Richardson to the Committee on Education of the State Board of Education," November 1, 1940, p. 9.

<sup>69</sup>Interview with R. H. Mount, op. cit.

departments of the parish. This gave prospective teachers an opportunity to work under college supervision in normal classroom situations.<sup>70</sup>

## VII. SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

On October 31, 1940, Dean Roy T. Sessums of the School of Engineering, outlined accomplishments for the previous four years.

At the beginning of the 1936-37 school session, the first year of Richardson's presidency, the personnel of the School of Engineering was composed of six faculty members and 224 students. During the ensuing four years, the School of Engineering grew and developed to the extent that there were 453 students and a faculty of ten full time teachers and one half-time teacher. In 1936, the School of Engineering was housed in a building which was erected in 1904. The machine shop and foundry were in a separate building constructed later. In 1940 a new building, Bogard Hall, had been constructed at a cost of \$375,000.00, in which all of the classrooms and laboratories were located. New equipment for laboratory purposes in the amount of \$50,000.00 was also provided during the four year period.<sup>71</sup>

The scholastic requirements and standards were improved to a great extent during the four years following 1936. With the approval of President Richardson, the School of Engineering instituted in 1939 the requirement that an average of "C" be made in all work in the freshman year.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>"Report from E. S. Richardson to the Committee on Education of the State Board of Education," November 1, 1940.

<sup>71</sup>"Report from Dean Roy T. Sessums to President E. S. Richardson," October 29, 1940.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

The program of studies was also expanded and improved during the years immediately following 1936. In 1936 the School of Engineering was offering Bachelor of Science degrees in two branches, civil engineering and a combination of mechanical and electrical engineering. In 1940 a revised curricular offering was in effect leading to the Bachelor of Science degree in any of four fields--chemical, civil, electrical and mechanical engineering.<sup>73</sup>

In summarizing his report to President Richardson, Dean Sessums stated:

During the four years of your administration our engineering faculty has increased by 75 per cent; our student enrollment has increased by 102 per cent; our curriculum offering has increased by 60 per cent; our laboratory equipment has been increased by approximately 125 per cent; our physical plant has increased from an inadequate, obsolete and hazardous building to one of the finest and most modern to be found any place; and the scholastic standards have been consistently raised and maintained.<sup>74</sup>

#### VIII. SCHOOL OF HOME ECONOMICS

Noted progress was observed in the School of Home Economics from 1936 to 1940. The School of Home Economics had been established apart from the School of Education and the Home Economics majors grew from 136 students in 1936 to 264 students in 1940. Six additional courses were being offered in 1940 with the help of five additional staff members.<sup>75</sup>

As in other departments and schools, the School of Home Economics realized measurable progress in buildings and equipment during the four years following the 1936-37 school session. The home management house was

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid.      <sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>"Report from Helen Graham to President E. S. Richardson," October 30, 1940.

remodeled and refurnished, the home economics building was renovated, and additional equipment purchased. A nursery school was established and equipped to round out the improvements in the School of Home Economics.<sup>76</sup>

President Richardson placed a great amount of emphasis on the instructional phases of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute. In a letter addressed to President Richardson, Dr. Rodney Cline, Dean of Instruction, made clear his feelings regarding the president's attitude toward this phase of the work of the college.<sup>77</sup>

It is not necessary here to call attention to the well-known facts about the rapid physical growth and development of the college during your administration. Less well-known, but of greater importance, is the present emphasis being placed, at your direction, upon the instructional phases of college life at this institution. After all, it is this for which the college exists. It is fortunate for the institution that you, a president, recognized this fact.

Please know that it is my conviction that, with your backing, the efforts of the faculty and myself will produce results in the way of raising academic standards at Tech to a significant degree.<sup>78</sup>

#### IX. DIVISION OF EXTENSION

The Division of Extension, headed by D. G. Armstrong, reported a broad program of work to President Richardson in October 1940. The Division of Extension was functioning in seven areas, namely: extension classes, correspondence courses, student placement, follow-up work, film depository, service to commuting students, and alumni organization.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Letter from Dr. Rodney Cline to President E. S. Richardson, October 30, 1940.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>"Report from D. G. Armstrong to President E. S. Richardson," October 30, 1940.

In offering extension and correspondence courses at Louisiana Tech it was the policy of the extension department to work toward satisfying needs rather than working for large enrollments. Considerable work was carried on in cooperation with the State Department of Education in an effort to raise standards of scholarship among the teachers in service. Also during Richardson's tenure at Polytech, considerable noncredit work for the benefit of adult education was done. Rural Sociology classes were conducted for the benefit of those engaged in Social Welfare Work.<sup>80</sup>

The Division of Extension put considerable emphasis on placement and follow-up of Tech graduates. Every effort was made to place graduates where they were best suited. To facilitate this service, a trained supervisor was employed to follow-up and give additional aid to those in service. It was reported in October 1940 that all graduates had received suitable employment within a year after graduation, except for those who for various reasons had failed to receive recommendations of their instructors.<sup>81</sup>

It was also reported that during the 1939-40 school session that only 7.3 per cent of Tech graduates who were beginning teachers failed to return to their positions because of inability to adjust themselves or to make good.

During the 1939-40 school session a film depository was established through the Division of Extension and \$2,000.00 was provided for purchase of films. Approximately twenty-five schools were serviced through this program the first year.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>Ibid.      <sup>81</sup>Ibid.      <sup>82</sup>Ibid.

The number of commuting students grew from one hundred and fifty students in 1936 to well over six hundred in 1940. The Extension Division worked with the deans and members of the faculty to give these commuting students a large portion of the benefits of campus life in addition to actual school work.<sup>83</sup>

Alumni organizations were perfected in the twenty-one parishes constituting the territory in which practically all graduates resided. Every effort was exerted through the Division of Extension to bring a spirit of cooperation into being through the student body, alumni and faculty. By this effort the college benefited greatly during the presidency of Richardson.<sup>84</sup>

#### X. BOOKKEEPING SYSTEM

When E. S. Richardson went to Louisiana Tech in 1936, the bookkeeping system was on a cash receipts and cash disbursements basis. In 1937 the system was changed to the accrual basis system. The cash receipts and cash disbursements basis did not take into consideration or provide for the recording of the liability until it had been paid.<sup>85</sup>

In addition to changing from the cash system to the accrual system in 1937, the institution also put in a centralized purchasing department where purchases were made through one office on a competitive basis. At the same time that the bookkeeping system was changed, and the purchasing system put in, a budget system was adopted whereby every department of the institu-

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid.      <sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Interview with A. McFarland, retired business manager of Tech, February 11, 1965.

tion was given a definite budget for the fiscal year and was required to live within its budget.<sup>86</sup>

In 1937, Louisiana Polytechnic Institute was in debt and had a very limited budget on which to operate, but as a result of the changes in the methods of operating, the institution was able to close the fiscal year with a small balance, and was never in the red again. As a result of being out of debt and on a cash basis, the institution was able to buy cheaper and take cash discounts wherever possible.<sup>87</sup>

#### XI. HONORARY DOCTORATE

On Wednesday night, May 24, 1938, President Richardson was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws during the regular spring graduation exercises of Centenary College. Several students and faculty members of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute attended the commencement that honored their president so highly. The doctor's degree recognized the accomplishments of President Richardson in less than two years of his presidency of Louisiana Tech, prior to which he acquired national distinction through his service as superintendent of schools in Webster Parish for sixteen years.<sup>88</sup>

#### XII. NAMED ACTING PRESIDENT OF

##### LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

During the summer of 1939 certain financial irregularities developed at Louisiana State University and a probe was ordered by the Governor. Due to

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid.      <sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>News item in the Tech Talk [Louisiana Polytechnic Institute] , May 27, 1938.

these circumstances, President James Monroe Smith resigned his position as chief administrator of the University.<sup>89</sup>

On Sunday, June 25, 1939, President Richardson was called to Baton Rouge by Governor Richard Leche. Richardson's only inkling of what might happen was a joking remark by the Governor that he might "fire" Richardson. However, Richardson journeyed to Baton Rouge with the idea that the Governor was probably calling in various school officials "for some kind of 'harmony' meeting." This was not the case at all, for when Richardson arrived, according to a news article in the Ruston Daily Leader, both Governor Leche and Lt. Governor Long asked Richardson to accept the presidency of Louisiana State University vacated by President Monroe. When this news reached the Tech faculty members and students, there was considerable surprise at the possibility of losing their president, even though unofficial mention had in the past pointed to him in the event that Dr. Smith's position was vacated.<sup>90</sup>

The Louisiana State University Board of Supervisors went into executive session on Monday afternoon, June 26, 1939, and accepted the resignation of Dr. James Monroe Smith, appointing Edwin Sanders Richardson as Acting President in his place. Richardson accepted the post, pending his resignation from Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, which he planned to submit to the State Board of Education on the following day. The Louisiana State University Board of Supervisors set Richardson's salary at \$12,000.00, twice the amount he received at Louisiana Tech.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>News item in the Ruston Daily Leader, June 26, 1939.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>News item in the Morning Advocate [Baton Rouge], June 27, 1939.



Along with resolutions directing Acting President Richardson to cooperate with and to assist in every possible way the investigation of all financial records, the Board of Supervisors adopted the following statements with relation to Acting President Richardson:

This board considers itself fortunate in obtaining the services of President Richardson as acting president of the university. His long experience in the public school system, his administrative leadership as president of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, his unimpeachable integrity and sound judgement are known to educators throughout Louisiana. Under his direction the future of the Louisiana State University in the rendition of educational service to the people of Louisiana is confidently assured and this board will cooperate with him to the fullest extent in placing all affairs at the University requiring attention and investigation on a thoroughly sound basis that will be acceptable to the people of the state.<sup>92</sup>

On Monday night, following his appointment to the acting presidency of Louisiana State University, Dr. Richardson spent a sleepless night. Numerous friends from North Louisiana called all hours of the night asking him to remain as Tech's president. About 11:00 that night he called members of his family in Ruston and discussed the situation with them. During the night he decided to return to Louisiana Polytechnic Institute where he felt that he could be of greater service.<sup>93</sup>

The next morning, on Tuesday, June 27, Dr. Richardson resigned the Louisiana State University post only a scant eighteen hours after accepting it.<sup>94</sup> According to a news article published in the Monroe Morning World, Dr. Richardson had not renounced the throne of England "for the woman he

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<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>Interview with D. L. Richardson, a son of E. S. Richardson, February 23, 1965.

<sup>94</sup>"Minutes of the Louisiana State University Board of Supervisors," June 27, 1939.

loved," but to many of his admirers in Ruston there was not much difference in the magnitude. He had turned down the presidency of one of the country's leading universities at a salary of \$12,000.00 a year, double his salary at Louisiana Polytech, a position of undisputed importance and distinction. He had done that "for the college he loved."<sup>95</sup>

Because President Richardson changed his mind and hurried back to Tech the same day he resigned from the Louisiana State University post, the Ruston Chamber of Commerce, headed by George L. Nicol, on Tuesday afternoon planned a hurried welcome with the swiftness that characterized the turn of events for the past forty-eight hours. Mayor Sam Caldwell of Shreveport was contacted as the principal welcoming speaker and he dropped everything to come to Ruston for the program at 7:30 p. m. When he was notified at 2:30 in the afternoon of Richardson's plans to return to Tech, Mayor Caldwell said that he had just wired congratulations to Dr. Richardson on his new position, but was elated over his decision to return to Tech.<sup>96</sup>

Despite the quickness of the reception planning, hundreds of friends and well-wishers turned out to Railroad Avenue in Ruston. When President Richardson arrived by automobile from Baton Rouge, Sheriff Bryan Thigpen stepped forward, snapped a pair of handcuffs on his wrist and announced that he was "under arrest" on an appearance bond which prohibited his leaving the "environs of Louisiana Tech." Mayor Sam Caldwell signed the necessary "bond" and the sheriff unlocked the handcuffs as the admiring crowd roared its appreciation. The Tech bank then filled the air at Rail-

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<sup>95</sup>News item in the Monroe Morning World, June 28, 1939.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

road Park with "Happy Days Are Here Again," and "For He's A Jolly Good Fellow."<sup>97</sup>

Mayor Caldwell in a brief welcoming speech commended Dr. Richardson for deciding to remain as president of Tech. President Richardson responded to the welcome in an informal address from the rear of a Ruston fire truck. He reviewed the events of the previous two days and then expressed a burning desire to continue what had been started three years earlier at Louisiana Polytechnic Institute. The band played the Tech Alma Mater to conclude the program. Wednesday morning found President Richardson "still doing business in the same old stand" after his whirlwind departure for Baton Rouge on Sunday evening at the call of Governor Leche.<sup>98</sup>

On June 30, 1939, President Richardson issued a statement to Governor Earl K. Long, Richard W. Leche, retiring governor, and the Louisiana State University Board of Supervisors in which he expressed thanks for the honor accorded him in offering him the high position at Louisiana State University. He also explained why he turned down the appointment. The statement read as follows:

It is needless for me to say to you again that I appreciate more than I can express the fact that I was selected by your honorable body to serve as acting president of the state's largest educational institution, and, I think, one of the greatest in the nation.

You understand the circumstances leading up to my selection and the rapidity with which it was made. After accepting your offer to head the affairs of the University, I began to realize that because of chaotic conditions prevailing in the institution it would be difficult for the chief executive to do justice to the university or to himself. Furthermore, my interest in

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<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid.

Louisiana Tech and its continued progress was a strong motivating influence causing me to reject the presidency of Louisiana State University.

Consequently, within a few hours after accepting the offer I conferred with Governor Earl K. Long and tendered him my resignation. Governor Long said, 'I don't blame you. Louisiana Tech is a great college and I can appreciate the feeling you have for that institution.'

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the members of the Louisiana State University faculty who manifested their loyalty and desire to cooperate along with their expressions of congratulations.

Your unsolicited expression of confidence in me will be treasured as one of the highlights of my long school administrative career.<sup>99</sup>

Editorially, the Shreveport Journal extended congratulations to Louisiana Polytechnic Institute on the fact that President E. S. Richardson was to remain there, instead of going to Louisiana State University. The editorial supported Richardson's decision to remain at Tech due to chaotic conditions in Baton Rouge and his desire to see his program of expansion at Tech to completion. Comments in the editorial went on:

He is happily situated, has the complete confidence of the student body and is held in the highest esteem by the state school authorities. . . . It is not surprising that the board of supervisors, faced with an emergency of desperate character, should turn to the man considered the best available and most likely to succeed in bringing order out of the chaos into which Louisiana State University has been catapulted. Their confidence in Dr. Richardson's ability to perform this task, we feel assured, was well placed, but we do not blame him for deciding to remain at Tech. His determination to see through the plans for building a greater and better college at Ruston is easily understood, and the faculty, the student body of that institution and the citizenship of Northwest Louisiana are all happy over the situation.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>News item in the Shreveport Journal, June 30, 1939.

<sup>100</sup>Editorial in the Shreveport Journal, June 20, 1939.

## XIII. STATEMENTS TO THE PUBLIC

President Richardson used every possible opportunity to hold and gain additional public support for Louisiana Polytech. On January 9, 1940, Richardson released an open letter to the citizens of Ruston calling to their attention that Louisiana Tech was the biggest business institution in town. Since August 14, 1936, through various agencies, Tech had transacted \$5,230,928.00 worth of business. When divided into a daily expenditure it amounted to more than \$3,500.00 per day. This did not include personal expenditures of the student body, faculty members and other campus employees. The letter further related that Tech had received more money from the State and Federal governments during that time than during the previous twenty years. Richardson continued his letter with these comments:

This phenomenal growth has been made possible through the confidence and goodwill of the people not only in Ruston, but throughout the State. Both State and Federal Governments have been generous in helping to change this college from a mediocre, poorly supported institution into a college that stands out as one of the leading technical schools, not only in Louisiana, but in the South. The philosophy of my stewardship has been to use every legitimate means of securing funds for Tech.<sup>101</sup>

President Richardson concluded his statements by praising the faculty, student body, alumni, and state officials for cooperating with the single purpose of making Tech one of the greatest colleges in the nation. He then pledged to change the campus into the loveliest spot in the State upon the completion of the building program then in progress.

On the occasion of his fourth anniversary as president of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, Richardson made the following statement:

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<sup>101</sup>Letter from E. S. Richardson to the members of the Chamber of Commerce, January 9, 1940.

I came to Louisiana Tech four years ago today. Since that time, with the cooperation of the faculty, students and friends of Tech, the institution has grown considerably and is now one of the state's favorite colleges.

We have had phenomenal growth. All departments have made rapid advances. An agricultural farm has been purchased and a building commensurate with the agricultural needs has been built. With the PWA, WPA and the NYA collaborating with the state, Tech has received hundreds of thousands of dollars for construction work and other activities. We have had engaged on the campus from 400 to 500 men doing plumbing, brick-laying, painting, and numerous other jobs.

The type of students that compose our student body are the 'salt of the earth.' They come from Anglo-Saxon families all over this area. The college has the respect and esteem of alumni, superintendents, principals and school people throughout the country.

Tech is no longer a 'Ruston institution.' It serves the state.

Tech has a faculty that ranks high in comparison with other educational institutions. I wish to say that, while we have some friendly differences, I am sure that they have been due to misunderstandings. The more you know about Tech and its operation, the stronger friend you will become.<sup>102</sup>

#### XIV. RICHARDSON PLACED ON "ACTING" BASIS

During the year of 1940, state election campaigns reached a feverish tempo. There were several positions on the State Board of Education being contested as well as all the top state offices. Five new members were elected to the State Board of Education, John E. Coxie defeated T. H. Harris for State Superintendent of Education, and Sam H. Jones defeated Earl K. Long for Governor of the State of Louisiana.

When the State Board of Education convened in Baton Rouge on August 2, 1940, the five new members of the Board were introduced. They were Dr. Rufus C. Harris, Mr. John P. Graham, Mr. Jacob H. Morrison, Mr. Walter W. Teekell, and Mr. Frank A. Godchaux. Newly-elected State Superintendent

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<sup>102</sup>News item in the Shreveport Journal, August 14, 1940.

Coxe and Governor Jones were also present.<sup>103</sup>

Mr. Walter J. Burke offered the following resolution and moved its adoption:

WHEREAS, the several colleges under the control of the state Board of Education are maintained at the expense of the taxpayers of the State for the purpose of furnishing to the youth the facilities for the moral and mental development best qualifying them for their status as citizens and that there is no right in any political group to inject into the curriculum tendered students, the hidden poison of factual politics, much less subservience to political dictatorship.

WHEREAS, the various appointees by the State Board of Education, to any position in the State Colleges under its control must have the individual right to follow his or her own views upon any political issue; and enjoy perfect freedom in the exercise of these rights; it is manifestly wrong for any such appointee to engage actively in any factional political campaigns; and more particularly is it obnoxious to all sense of justice for any person in any such institution holding a position of authority over others to assume to influence or control the political actions of such persons.

WHEREAS, it is advisable at this time for the State Board of Education to declare a principle by which it will be governed in the further administration of the institutions under its control.

BE IT RESOLVED, that each appointee by the State Board of Education to any office, member of faculty, or any position of trust in any of the departments of any such institutions, shall be so appointed or employed with the distinct understanding that such employment is not dependent upon any political affiliation or favoritism; but that any such appointee who will assume to exceed the exercise of his right to perform his duty as a citizen unhampered and uncontrolled by any political super-control, and shall engage in factional politics, shall be declared to have forfeited his right to the trust reposed in him; and will be subject to removal.<sup>104</sup>

The resolution was seconded by Mrs. Eleanore H. Meade and adopted by a unanimous vote of the State Board. Mr. George T. Madison then moved that the Board go into executive session; the motion was seconded by Mr. Jacob H. Morrison and adopted unanimously.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup>"Official Proceedings of the State Board of Education, Baton Rouge," August 2, 1940, p. 6.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid.      <sup>105</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

When the Board came out of executive session, a letter of resignation from Mr. L. E. Frazar, President of Southwestern Louisiana Institute was read. The letter, addressed to members of the State Board of Education, and dated on that day, read:

I herewith tender my resignation as President of Southwestern Louisiana Institute, effective at the will of the Board.

I feel as though a majority of the Board would favor me, but in the interest of Southwestern, and desiring to give the new administration a free hand, I herewith tender my resignation.

Let me express to you and members of the Board my appreciation of the many courtesies you have shown me, and for the sympathetic attitude which has characterized your dealings with the problems of Southwestern during my incumbency as President.<sup>106</sup>

The letter of resignation was accepted and it was further moved that the resignation become effective as soon as a successor could be selected. Mr. George T. Madison then moved that the presidents of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, Louisiana State Normal College, Southeastern Louisiana College, the State School for Deaf, State School for Blind, Southern University, and the Louisiana Negro Normal and Industrial Institute be placed on an acting basis. The Educational Committee was directed to investigate each individual situation thoroughly and make recommendations to the Board in December as to the employment of permanent presidents of the institutions named. The motion was unanimously adopted after being seconded by Dr. Rufus C. Harris.<sup>107</sup>

The Shreveport Times released a news article on August 3rd, the day after the Board meeting, stating that it was reliably reported that the five new members of the State Board had wanted to make immediate changes in several institutions but that the removals were blocked by the six old

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., p. 9.



members, most of whom wanted to re-employ all the incumbent presidents. Some of the old members expressed the view that it was too late to make changes in the institutions and the decision to retain the presidents in their acting capacities was made as a compromise.<sup>108</sup>

After August 2, 1940, E. S. Richardson fulfilled the duties and responsibilities of his office in an acting capacity. What had really happened to bring about this kind of action? President Richardson had stated many times that he would use every legitimate means to secure funds for Louisiana Polytechnic Institute.

His interest was in building a greater Louisiana Tech and he was realistic about it. He knew that the only way that funds could be secured was through political channels--the Legislature and Governor. He availed himself of every opportunity to work with them and use the means he thought best to get this cooperation and support.<sup>109</sup>

In the summer of 1939, Lieutenant Governor Earl K. Long became governor upon the resignation of Governor Richard Leche. President Richardson had worked closely with both of these state leaders as a member of the Louisiana Teachers Association Legislative Committee and as president of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute. When state elections of 1940 rolled around Governor Long was eligible to succeed himself. The campaign for governor between Earl K. Long and Sam H. Jones became very heated. In all parts of the state the factions became known as the Earl Long crowd and the Sam Jones crowd. President Richardson was labeled as a member of the

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<sup>108</sup>News item in the Shreveport Times, August 3, 1940.

<sup>109</sup>Interview with R. H. Mount, op. cit.

Long crowd.<sup>110</sup>

President Richardson had extended certain courtesies to Governor Long that individuals of the opposite faction frowned upon. Governor Long visited in President Richardson's home at Louisiana Tech several times. Showing the usual courtesy expected toward any governor, President Richardson introduced Governor Long as a visiting speaker on several occasions in Ruston. This bitterly antagonized some of the Sam Jones supporters.<sup>111</sup>

When the State Board of Education met on January 20, 1941, routine business was considered before going into executive session. During executive session the following resolution was offered by Mr. Jacob Morrison and seconded by Dr. Rufus Harris and adopted by a unanimous vote.

It is moved and seconded that at a meeting to be held March 3, 1941, the Board elect permanent presidents for the year 1941-42 for all institutions under the Board's control;

Further, that the incumbent acting presidents will be given an opportunity to be heard in their own behalf if they wish to succeed themselves;

Further, that the State Superintendent of Education submit to the members of the Board his nominations for the presidencies of said institutions in ample time to allow the members of the Board an opportunity to consider them; and

Further, that the Board instruct the incumbent acting presidents of these institutions that they refrain from having their faculties, staffs, and student bodies engage in any activity in the interest of their candidacies.<sup>112</sup>

After the January meeting of the State Board of Education it became evident that Richardson along with several other college presidents would be replaced. A majority of the major newspapers in North Louisiana

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<sup>110</sup>Interview with E. R. Hester, retired principal of Arcadia High School, December 16, 1964.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid.

<sup>112</sup>"Official Proceedings of the State Board of Education, Baton Rouge," January 20, 1941, p. 9.

supported President Richardson's position in the situation. A petition was drawn up in the town of Arcadia asking the State Board of Education to reappoint President Richardson, and everyone without exception signed it. E. R. Hester, long-time principal of Arcadia High School and friend of E. S. Richardson, recalled, "We had the Sam Jones crowd as well as the Earl Long crowd on the petition." The school people were outspoken for him. A committee of school people appeared before the State Board of Education to speak in President Richardson's behalf, but they were not allowed to talk. They were told that it was not on the agenda.<sup>113</sup>

J. Ed. Howe of Shreveport wrote a letter to the editor of the Shreveport Times in defense of President Richardson and praising him for his work at Tech. Stating his shock at the possibility of Richardson's dismissal, Howe wrote:

When I heard the report I doubted if there was anything to it, for the reason that I was unwilling to believe that any person with an I.Q. above moronic stage would want to get rid of a man who has done more for the school in the four and a half years that he has been at the head of it, than all of his predecessors combined in all the years of the school's history.<sup>114</sup>

Howe then discussed the accomplishments at Louisiana Polytechnic Institute under President Richardson's administration. In closing his letter, he hit hard at the political aspect of Louisiana that he believed was giving impetus to Richardson's removal. The concluding paragraphs were as follows:

Our schools are already suffering from too much political dickering by state administrative officials. Even now our great state university is on probation. The Normal College has been kicked out of the Southern

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<sup>113</sup>Interview with E. R. Hester, op. cit.

<sup>114</sup>Letter from J. Ed Howe to the Editor of the Shreveport Times, January 28, 1941.

Association of Colleges entirely, and Southwestern only this year was placed in full fellowship. Louisiana Tech alone was the only school last year which had a clean slate, and it still has it.

Sam Jones and his administration associates are the servants of the people, not their masters, and the people should demand that their servants behave. The state schools and other institutions belong to the people and not the politicians, and the people should demand their complete depoliticalization.<sup>115</sup>

On Sunday, February 2, 1941, the Shreveport Times published an editorial supporting Richardson's presidency at Tech. The editorial follows:

#### THE PRESIDENCY OF LOUISIANA TECH

It has become evident in recent weeks that a definite effort is under way by certain political influences to oust Prof. E. S. Richardson from the presidency of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute at Ruston. This effort seems to center on disagreement with Prof. Richardson's past political beliefs, rather than on any questions of his qualifications, experience and accomplishments in the position he now holds.

The matter of a man's political beliefs or philosophies is the last thing in the world that should be allowed to enter into the question of his place in the state's educational system. In the last gubernatorial campaign the politicalizing of our state educational system by the old regime was made a major issue and was a big factor in the defeat of that regime. In voting out that regime, we believed that we were voting out the system of awarding educational posts as plums for political support. Now, it seems that some would oust Prof. Richardson chiefly because he was not in accord with their political beliefs and presumably would replace him with someone who was more loyal at election time.

That is not a policy that should be followed. It is not wise; and wise, safe guidance is the greatest need of Louisiana's educational system today. The rebuilding of that system physically and the rebuilding of public faith in it is well under way. That rebuilding can only be hindered by permitting politics to enter into selection of executives at Louisiana Tech, or in any other Louisiana educational institutions.

Prof. Richardson has demonstrated his ability to carry Tech forward. To replace him now would only tend to hamper much good that he has started and to weaken public confidence at a time when public confidence is essential. Louisiana Tech is a state institution, but it is primarily a North

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<sup>115</sup>Ibid.

Louisiana institution. We believe that people of the northern part of the state have come to respect it and to be more deeply attached to it under Prof. Richardson's administration than at any time since it was founded more than 40 years ago. Throughout this area it is looked on as 'our school.' To tamper with its presidency now undoubtedly would bring shifts on down the line in the school's administration, with resulting difficulty in maintaining its present standing and prestige.<sup>116</sup>

During the week following the Shreveport Times Sunday editorial, the Monroe Morning World and the Monroe News Star ran reprints and endorsements of the Shreveport Times editorial. Additional comments were included in these editorials to give added emphasis to their attitudes about the matter.<sup>117</sup>

The Ruston Daily Leader, the hometown newspaper of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, published the following editorial in behalf of President Richardson:

There can be little question on the qualifications of Prof. Richardson. He is a man whose education never will be finished because he constantly is studying, conducting personal research into educational problems and seeking broader and better paths to follow for the institution he heads. He has had more than 30 years of experience in Louisiana schools as high school principal in Bienville parish, superintendent of Bienville schools, in charge of the L.S.U. junior extension work, superintendent of Webster parish schools and finally as president of Louisiana Tech since 1936. He has benefited himself during this period by frequent study at outside institutions. His work as Webster parish school superintendent was used by graduate students of universities in other states as the base for extensive and commendatory theses.

From the standpoint of accomplishments--aside from what he has done in the posts already mentioned--his record at Louisiana Tech has been one of steady and rapid gain for that institution. During the four full school years of his presidency, the enrollment has been increased by nearly 900 students. The educational standards of faculty members have been raised sharply, with more men

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<sup>116</sup>Editorial in the Shreveport Times, February 2, 1941.

<sup>117</sup>Editorials in the Monroe Morning World and the Monroe News Star, February 7, 1941.

of degrees and more men of high degrees than in the past. His administration from the business standpoint has been excellent. He lifted Louisiana Tech from the probationary list of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools to an accredited rating.

But, perhaps the greatest good that Prof. Richardson has done does not show in any statistical record. That good has come from a constant effort, since his days as a high school principal, to bring more and more North Louisiana boys and girls out of the pine woods and into schools so that they may have greater education and greater opportunity in life than had their ancestors. Steadily he has carried on a sort of missionary work among rural youth which, no matter what form it took, always had the one objective of bringing ambition to the hearts and vision to the minds of boys and girls who might otherwise be shut out from such things.

A man who steadfastly has followed such a course should not have his work ended or turned over to another simply because he perhaps did not 'vote right' in the eyes of those who would award his post to some political friend. Certainly it should be kept in mind that if Prof. Richardson is removed from his present post, the same charge of politicalization that caused Louisiana Tech to be placed on probation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools can be lodged against it again. Politics put Louisiana Tech in bad repute and Prof. Richardson brought it back to good repute. He should be retained in his post and the state should be informed at once that he will be retained.<sup>118</sup>

The Webster Parish School Board passed resolutions calling for Richardson's retention at Louisiana Polytechnic Institute. These resolutions were printed editorially in the Shreveport Journal on February 13, 1941. Significant statements contained in the resolutions were these:

Continuing President Richardson in his position as president of Tech will remove from the minds of the people of the state the idea that there is any intention on the part of the State Board of Education to let politics play any part in the selection of school officials. Inestimable harm may result just at this time to the student body of Tech and the public at large through the demoralizing effect that results from discord in state affairs. This board feels that under President Richardson's leadership Louisiana Tech has for the first time in its history made itself felt in the hill parishes of North Louisiana and is touching vitally every community in this section of the state.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup>Editorial in the Ruston Daily Leader, February 7, 1941.

<sup>119</sup>Editorial in the Shreveport Journal, February 13, 1941.

The Shreveport Times on February 23, 1941, published its last editorial in support of Richardson's presidency of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute.<sup>120</sup> The editorial, entitled, "A Remarkable Response," related the tremendously favorable response received by that paper as to the editorial published three weeks earlier in support of Dr. Richardson. The response had been no less than amazing. Letters of commendation were received by the publisher from every part of North Louisiana as well as from portions of the state in central and south Louisiana. Educators and plain citizens joined in emphatic endorsement of the Shreveport Times' declaration that Louisiana Tech's presidency should not be made a political football. Many of these expressions came from persons who were strong supporters of Governor Jones.

The editorial continued:

Nothing could be more clear, now, than that the removal of President Richardson would cause a storm of dissension in the North Louisiana parishes. This strife ought to be a matter of serious concern to Governor Jones, who has sought unity in support of good government, and to the State Board of Education, now pledged to a policy of lifting state institutions of higher learning out of the zones of partisan clamor and dispute.

Finally, the comment which the Shreveport Times has received should be regarded as a call for immediate action. The present state of unrest regarding the Tech presidency is harmful to the institution and causes needless anxiety for thousands of its friends throughout the North Louisiana parishes. It is time for the State Board to say what it intends to do--and under the circumstances certainly the statement should be announced that Mr. Richardson will continue as president of Tech.<sup>121</sup>

The editorial closed with the statement that there should be no further delay and that the Governor and the Board should act at once.

What was to come? T. H. Harris, who had been State Superintendent of Education for thirty-two years in Louisiana viewed the situation as follows:

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<sup>121</sup>Ibid.

I approach my seventy-second birthday, in March of 1941, after nearly a year of watching from the side lines the passing of events in Louisiana and the rest of the world. And a sorry spectacle it is. In Louisiana there is political strife, hatred, and persecution . . . .<sup>122</sup>

#### XV. RICHARDSON REPLACED

When the State Board of Education convened in Baton Rouge on Monday, March 3, 1941, the routine matters of business were handled in the morning session. The Board reconvened at 2:00 p. m. and immediately went into executive session. While the Board was in executive session it took up the election of presidents of institutions under its control, with the exception of trade schools, for the 1941-42 fiscal year. Mr. A. A. Fredericks, acting president of Louisiana State Normal College, was replaced by Dr. Joe Farrar, and E. S. Richardson, acting president of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, was replaced by Dr. Claybrook Cottingham.<sup>123</sup>

While still in executive session, the Board further directed:

1. That Mr. A. A. Fredericks, now acting president of the Louisiana State Normal College, be paid through June 30, 1941, at his regular monthly rate of salary.
2. That acting president E. S. Richardson, of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, be paid through June 30, 1941, at his regular monthly rate of salary.
3. That Mr. E. S. Richardson be made President Emeritus of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, the position to become effective July 1, 1941, and that from that date he be paid a salary of one hundred (\$100.00)

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<sup>122</sup>T. H. Harris, The Memoirs of T. H. Harris (Bureau of Educational Materials and Research, Louisiana State University, 1963), p. 191.

<sup>123</sup>"Official Proceedings of the State Board of Education, Baton Rouge," March 3, 1941, p. 18.



dollars per month while filling that position.

4. That Dr. Farrar's and Dr. Cottingham's election be made effective as of April 1, 1941, that the new presidents go to their respective institutions in the meantime, that they have access to all records, reports, etc., of the institutions, and, further that they proceed immediately to prepare their lists of recommended faculty members and their budgets for the coming fiscal year. It was directed that, should Dr. Cottingham not find it possible to report to Louisiana Polytechnic Institute by April 1, 1941, Dr. W. R. Cline, now Dean of Instruction of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, perform the duties of president of the institution from April 1, 1941, to such time as Dr. Cottingham can report, but in no case later than July 1, 1941.<sup>124</sup>

In a letter to Mr. Frank Godchaux, President of the State Board of Education, Edwin Sanders Richardson refused to accept the position of President Emeritus of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute. The Ruston Daily Leader termed the following letter as in keeping with the high order of Richardson's educational and public life.

Mr. Frank Godchaux, President  
State Board of Education  
Abbeville, Louisiana  
Dear Sir:

I wish to express to you and the members of the Board my appreciation of being elected President Emeritus of Louisiana Tech. The following statement which I made to the press covers my position in this matter.

'The State Board of Education has removed me as president of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute at Ruston, and elected me president emeritus. It is with deep regret that I leave the Institution. My whole heart and soul during the past four and one-half years have been in the building of the institution I dreamed of at the time I was made president in 1936. My work had just begun. My interest in Tech will not be diminished, and I will cooperate to the fullest extent with Dr. Cottingham. I am for Tech first, last and always.

'I am unable, however, to accept the tender of president emeritus of the institution. It would have been the greatest honor I know of that could come to me

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<sup>124</sup>Ibid., pp. 18-19.

if this tender had come at the proper time and in the proper spirit. It has been tendered me at this time in an attempt to cover up an act of a majority of the State Board of Education that cannot be successfully defended. I believe that I can be more useful to Tech in the future by not compromising my honor by accepting this.

'I have wired Dr. Cottingham my congratulations on his appointment as president of Tech, and have assured him of my full cooperation in the building of a greater institution.

'I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my many friends in Louisiana who did all possible to have me continued as president of Louisiana Tech. I also appreciate the confidence of my friends on the State Board of Education.'

I think you fully understand that there has been a feeling of unfriendliness on the part of some members of the Board toward me since August 2, when I was made acting president, and that I have been under a great handicap in carrying on the work of this institution.

I did not make this statement to the press in a defiant manner, but I think you will agree that my stand is correct. I am a poor man; I have devoted my entire life to teaching and school work; I have never been a politician; I have never employed a person at Louisiana Tech or elsewhere based on political alignments.

It is going to be hard on me but as stated above, I cannot accept the honor tendered me by the State Board of Education at its last meeting.

I am going to comply, of course, with the Board's action and make way for Dr. Cottingham on the first of April, and I sincerely hope that he will make good in this position.

With best wishes to you and the entire Board,

Sincerely,  
E. S. RICHARDSON<sup>125</sup>

A letter to the editor of the Shreveport Journal written by J. Ed Howe on March 10, 1941, commended Richardson for rejecting the President Emeritus position.<sup>126</sup> The letter stated that E. S. Richardson, deposed president of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, came home on Sunday, March 9, a much bigger man in the eyes of his friends than when he went away a week earlier to "the slaughter" prepared for him at Baton Rouge.

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<sup>125</sup>News item in the Ruston Daily Leader, March 7, 1941.

<sup>126</sup>Letter from J. Ed Howe to the editor of the Shreveport Journal, March 10, 1941.

His resentment of the gratuitous gesture to salve the injustice done him by offering him the title of President Emeritus of Tech, was in keeping with his high sense of honor, and his actions in going down like a general instead of sacrificing principle for a 'mess of pottage', was not any surprise to his friends here. Even the three or four individuals here who opposed him, had to admit that 'here is a man.'<sup>127</sup>

The letter closed with statements of high regard for Dr. Cottingham:

The people here have a high regard for Dr. Claybrook Cottingham, who is to succeed Mr. Richardson, and when he comes here he will meet a warm welcome and will be given every co-operation. He has already been so assured.<sup>128</sup>

Before he left his position as Louisiana Tech's president, a committee representing the student body of Louisiana Tech presented President Richardson with a beautiful watch, chain and knife. Mr. Eugene B. Scott, accompanied by Earl Hogan, Hines Rogers and Melvin Butler, made the presentation. It required only a day and a half to raise the fund for the gift, which cost approximately \$100.00, and twenty-five cents was the largest donation solicited.<sup>129</sup>

On March 28, 1941, E. S. Richardson in a letter to the members of the faculty and staff, expressed regret that he was leaving and at the same time asked that they support the new administration. The letter follows:

LOUISIANA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE  
Office of the President  
Ruston, Louisiana  
March 28, 1941

To Members of the Faculty and Staff  
Louisiana Polytechnic Institute  
Dear Friends:

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<sup>127</sup>Ibid.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid.

<sup>129</sup>News item in the Monroe News Star, March 25, 1941.

It is with regret that I am leaving you. I came here on August 14, 1936, as most of you know. I devoted my entire life and energies during this time to building an institution that would meet the needs of this area. This has partially been accomplished.

The first part of my administration was pleasant indeed. Since my rank was reduced to acting president I have been unable to do many of the things that I would like to have done. I am glad to say, however, that a great majority of the faculty and staff realized this handicap and cooperated with me to the fullest extent. This I appreciate very much.

My hope is that you will support the new administration and make the stay of the new president very pleasant.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

/s/ E. S. Richardson<sup>130</sup>

#### XVI. RICHARDSON'S PRESIDENCY IN RETROSPECT

When Edwin Sanders Richardson became president of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, that was a new day for Tech. The college seemed to take on new life. He was able through his work with legislators, the Governor and others to get needed appropriations. There was a tremendous difference in the quality of work that the faculty and students did after he went there as president.<sup>131</sup>

Edwin Sanders Richardson was held in the very highest regard by those who worked with him at Louisiana Polytechnic Institute. As all men, President Richardson had certain minor shortcomings and a few people had grave reservations about him. Some considered him overly aggressive, insufficiently sensitive at times and some even cast doubt as to the breadth and depth of his culture. As to the breadth and depth of his culture, his critics were very wrong. He seemed at times abrupt, in an excessive hurry

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<sup>130</sup>Letter from E. S. Richardson to the Faculty and Staff of Tech, March 28, 1941.

<sup>131</sup>Interview with E. R. Hester, op. cit.

to get things done at once, and, some people thought, too fast. They wondered if he were sufficiently sensitive to contradictory views and to people who had ideas different from his.<sup>132</sup>

The key note or point to make in regard to this so-called excessive aggressiveness is the fact that he was never aggressive or insensitive to others in a desire to accumulate wealth, in which he had no real interest at all. He was a man who had a tremendous belief in education--education in a broad sense. To him, education was not learning how to follow a specific profession, not mastering a specific subject matter though all these are parts of education, but education to him was a way of living, a way of living well in school and out. President Richardson thought the American way of life had great potentialities in growth and improvement. He was so keenly aware of so many things that could be done and needed to be done. He was aware because his mind was never limited to traditional ways of thinking, so he knew there were opportunities in agriculture, in industry, beautification of surroundings, and opportunities in giving people an increased drive to learn, to grow and to serve. Not a man who felt it was his job to sit in an office a number of hours a day doing an assigned job and occasionally making a suggestion, he was impatient with others who were that way. The teacher who came to class with the idea that a couple of chapters would be covered in a given week, hoping some children would learn the material and having little concern for those who didn't--those were teachers who irritated him.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup>Interview with Dr. H. J. Sachs, Head of the English Department at Tech, February 11, 1965.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid.

"You're dealing with human beings," Richardson would say. "There's such a wealth of personalities, a God-given gift, a whole range of gifts and utilities, here's all these opportunities, let's bring them together, let's move forward." Of course, the complacent, the smug, the slow, the intolerant, took offense at times.<sup>134</sup>

President Richardson was definitely aware that the South was a land of untapped potentialities. He loved to name the resources of the region, long before Howard Odom's books became popular. Mr. Richardson would list the fact that the South had the climate for growing trees faster than anywhere else, for keeping dairy cattle in the pasture longer hours, the water ways, the minerals and all these things. He viewed the School of Engineering at Tech as a convenient place for promoting this development. Engineers were needed to bring these resources into play.<sup>135</sup>

A particular thing that troubled Richardson was that people would go through grade school, high school, and college in our public school system living off these tax-supported institutions, and then would have to go elsewhere for employment. He wanted Tech's engineering school to tie into industry and bring it South.<sup>136</sup>

He was not a man who had excessive faith in just material things, that a fine school was merely one with big buildings. He did feel that students would learn better in surroundings that were moderately comfortable and attractive. He knew that in certain fields of study facilities were indispensable. To most people he was the builder and they thought most exclusively in terms of buildings and the externals. He stressed those, but he was stressing other kinds of buildings as well.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup>Ibid.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid.

When Richardson was president of Tech and the word "plastics" was new in people's vocabulary, he would tell his friends that the day was coming when thousands of conveniences would be placed in homes due to the plastics industry. To many of his friends this was strange, but Richardson had a very clear picture of what was coming.<sup>138</sup>

E. S. Richardson was ahead of his time in many ways. He had a very understanding interpretation of the racial problems that faced the South. There were two types of people that amused President Richardson in this problem area. There were those who thought that people could go back to the 1860's so far as race relations were concerned and there were those who thought that the Negro should be immediately embraced. Richardson summed up his attitude toward these positions by saying,

I have some sympathy for the man who does not want to desert the ways of his ancestors and these people who talk about improving this business of race relations simply on the basis of kindness or charity, mean well. The real progress in race relations will come when more of us white folks understand that for purely practical consideration and our own welfare, we need to do things for the Negro even if we are not concerned about his welfare.<sup>139</sup>

Befre he was at Tech, in Webster Parish he was helping the Negro to help himself. He felt it was important that the Negroes learn to be better farmers, to be cleaner, to use screens, to be more efficient in handling money, to teach them to nurse other Negroes, and then to nurse whites. By showing the white people the capabilities of the Negro, better relations were bound to follow.<sup>140</sup>

President Richardson had a delightful sense of humor. He wasn't an angry man blustering through life, he could chuckle, he loved to chuckle,

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<sup>138</sup>Ibid.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid.

and he could laugh at himself. If he could bring a point out by telling a mistake that he had made and how that mistake came home to roost, he would do so. He liked people.<sup>141</sup>

He didn't have a military mind where everything had to be done through channels. If he found a private who had something to contribute, he called on him. If he found anyone from a yard man up to a school teacher in college at any level who had something to contribute, he would go right to him. He wasn't one to let formalities stand in the way of major accomplishments.<sup>142</sup>

Richardson had the ability to show confidence in the people who worked with him. He let his co-workers know that he had confidence in them. This confidence seemed to carry over into the student body at Louisiana Polytechnic Institute. People just simply had to do their best when the president showed so much confidence in them.<sup>143</sup>

There were those who saw President Richardson as being brusque and crude at times. They should have seen him in his home. He treated his wife as if she were a delicate young princess--a gentleness, a consideration and loving kindness was there that was beautiful. She was a splendid person, very reserved, and he was the buffer between her and anything that might have been unpleasant.<sup>144</sup>

President Richardson never kept office hours, he was always in the

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<sup>141</sup>Ibid.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid.

<sup>143</sup>Interview with Coach Joe Aillet, head football coach at Tech, February 11, 1965.

<sup>144</sup>Interview, Sachs, op. cit.



office doing something and available to anyone who might wish to see him. He was President of Tech twenty-four hours a day. He believed in making things happen, not in waiting for time to bring them about. Much progress comes from passage of time and also much evil happens in the world by the same factor. Men who are natural leaders, as President Richardson was, help to develop climates of opinion and attitudes, thus bringing about progress of an intangible and material nature. The man was alive, he was dedicated to causes--he wasn't dedicated to Mr. Richardson.<sup>145</sup>

Dr. Sachs, Head of the Department of English at Tech, in an interview in his home, said,

I don't know where he found the time, but he did find time to read widely. I can remember on a number of occasions, he would refer to something he had read and suggest that we read it. Faculty members would bring material to him and suggest that he read it. He invariably did and I think he helped engender an intellectual vitality on the campus which was rather striking for a while.<sup>146</sup>

Recalling the past, Dr. Sachs went on:

By the time President Richardson left Tech we became very close friends. My classroom and his office were on the same floor of the same building. I had occasion to see him often. He would check with me on the phraseology of something he was writing at times.

With relation to his being placed on the acting president basis, I think he took it as a big man. Of course he was emotional about it at times, but he never slowed down in his intellectual powers and physical vigor. He felt that Tech was moving and moving in the right direction. He had immediate plans and long range plans. He was enough of a man of the world, he was courageous enough to look around and to realize that these things happen.

He was never a man to look for an accumulation of wealth. He liked a moderate amount of comfort and that's all that interested him. He had no worries about his immediate personal future. He knew he was not ready to retire and he knew he would go to work somewhere and he

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<sup>145</sup>Ibid.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid.

would be able to get along. There was a little bitterness, but he took it courageously.

One or two people made specific charges and he would answer them with a courteous letter, but not a begging, pleading letter. He showed me a reply he received from one letter, he would say, 'Look at that, Sachs, what do you think of that fellow? I tell you my phrase--it's small potatoes.'

The political reality was at that time so that no man could be an effective president of a state college with the political forces against him. One just had to concede--Mr. Richardson was a realist. I would say that the majority of the faculty who were concerned about such matters, were deeply concerned about his leaving.<sup>147</sup>

E. R. Hester, a long-time principal of Arcadia High School, recalling when Richardson left Tech, had this to say:

When he left Tech, we felt it and it took a long time to recover from the loss. We school people were in a better position to know what was going on by what our students did when they went there. I'm glad that I have lived during the life of Edwin Sanders Richardson and consider it a privilege to have known him.<sup>148</sup>

Joe Aillet, coach at Louisiana Polytechnic Institute since December 1939, recalled President Richardson in this respect:

The very basic principles that have allowed the present athletic program to exist through the years were nurtured by President Richardson. He very firmly approved them and defended them when necessary. President Richardson made it possible for me to put into practice the things that I believed in. I was fortunate to get my first major opportunity under a man like Richardson, a man who could analyze what I wanted to do and willing to back it up all the way. He was a man with a big heart, he embraced everyone on the campus, realizing they were all a part of the total campus program.<sup>149</sup>

R. H. Mount, who came to Tech from Tioga High School to initiate the audio-visual education program, remembers President Richardson as follows:

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<sup>147</sup>Ibid.

<sup>148</sup>Interview with Hester, op. cit.

<sup>149</sup>Interview with Aillet, op. cit.

"Go-getter," seems to describe President Richardson as much as anything. He made a vivid impression upon me, one that will remain with me the balance of my life. He was one whom I admired greatly for his altruistic effort, his feeling toward doing everything possible in building up a great institution of learning. He spared no effort. He was on the go day and night. He was willing to go any time, any place, to do something for the betterment of Louisiana Tech.

His foresight in seeing things for the future was not equaled by many of his co-workers. For that reason many thought him probably visionary and too prone to be too optimistic about the future. However, future events usually bore out the fact that he was correct and some of us were in error in not thinking these things would take place.<sup>150</sup>

R. L. Moncrief, long-time principal of Tallulah High School, remembered President Richardson as an extremely friendly individual. Moncrief related,

I remember as a student at Tech I was working in the area of the president's office. I was up in a tree pruning some of the dead limbs and President Richardson stepped out of his office. He looked up in the tree and said, 'I am E. S. Richardson.' I came down and shook his hand and we talked for some time. From then on I felt that Tech had a special interest in me.<sup>151</sup>

Looking back upon the life of President Richardson, L. W. Ferguson, a high school principal and Louisiana educator for many years, remembered Richardson as a "true educator." He had a goal in life, and he had a vision of great things to come. Ferguson recalled,

He came to Haynesville High School when I was principal. He and Dean Bogard told about what Tech had to offer in engineering. Before Mr. Richardson finished talking he would have everyone believing that they couldn't be educated unless they came to Tech.

In selling Tech, Richardson would present his case in a manner that the kids would just eat up. It rather amazed people that the president of a college would take time to go out into the field to encourage students to come to Tech. He did this kind of thing all over the country. He sold Tech in such a way that everyone knew it was there. He made it a state institution and not just a Ruston institution. His life was an 'open book.'

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<sup>150</sup>Interview with Mount, op. cit.

<sup>151</sup>Interview with R. L. Moncrief, February 25, 1965.

Everything was above board.<sup>152</sup>

His philosophy was one of the importance of each individual student. He was a firm believer in a famous quotation of Booker T. Washington. "Let down your bucket where you are."<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>152</sup>Interview with L. W. Ferguson, January 9, 1965.

<sup>153</sup>Interview with Dr. John A. Cawthon, Professor of Education at Tech, October 14, 1964.

## CHAPTER VII

### RETIREMENT FROM EDUCATION AND THE CLOSING YEARS OF LIFE (1941-1950)

When Edwin Sanders Richardson left the presidency of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, he retired from the immediate field of education, but he never relinquished his vigor for progress. He realized that after more than forty years' service in education, he would have to retire from that field of endeavor. On June 25, 1941, Mr. P. C. Rogers, Secretary-Treasurer of the Retirement System wrote Mr. Richardson at 261 Prospect Street in Shreveport, notifying him that his monthly retirement income would begin on July 1 at a monthly rate of \$137.21.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Rogers closed his letter to Mr. Richardson as follows:

I feel sure that it is comforting to you to look forward to retirement after many years of fine service with an assured moderate monthly income from a system that is sound actuarially in excellent condition. You are not old for:

'If in life you keep the zest, if from life  
take the best, if you love you hold;  
No matter how the years go by, no matter  
how the birthdays fly, you are not old.'<sup>2</sup>

Again on July 1, 1941, Secretary-Treasurer Rogers wrote Mr. Richardson another short letter which included the following statements:

We are enclosing herewith our check for your first retirement allowance. A check for a like amount, \$137.21, will be sent to you on or about the first of each month as long as you live.

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from P. C. Rogers to E. S. Richardson, June 25, 1941.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

May we wish for you a long life in which you will receive the highest blessings and experience with greatest joys.

Mr. Rogers closed his letter by quoting Robert Browning:

Grow old along with me!  
The best is yet to be  
The last of life, for which the first was made.<sup>3</sup>

# I. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO THE WEBSTER COUNCIL

Edwin Sanders Richardson refused to grow old, for on July 1, 1941, he resumed his place in the active world of employment as Executive Secretary to the Webster Council. Immediately he notified P. C. Rogers to change his address to 306 South Broadway, Minden, Louisiana.<sup>4</sup> Big things were happening around Minden due to the location of an ordnance plant on the outskirts of town. Richardson was to be the coordinator between local parish officials and the Federal Government on this tremendous project.

The major problem confronting E. S. Richardson and the Webster Council was the lack of housing facilities needed to care for the hundreds of new families who were connected with the new shell plant project. At the same time it was necessary to prevent over-building by private interests, which could have resulted in a great number of "ghost" houses at the end of the national emergency.<sup>5</sup>

To meet this problem E. S. Richardson and the Webster Council favored location by the government of prefabricated homes which could be easily removed when the emergency was over. The entire year as Executive Secretary of the Webster Council was spent in making surveys and gathering data required by the government to back up applications for government aid.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., July 1, 1941.

<sup>4</sup>Letter from E. S. Richardson to P. C. Rogers, July 2, 1941.

<sup>5</sup>Editorial in the Minden Herald, January 1, 1942. <sup>6</sup>Ibid.

The Minden Herald reported on January 1, 1942 that 216 prefabricated houses would be located on one tract and one hundred family size trailer homes on another to alleviate the housing problems around Minden. Credit was given where credit was due with these statements:

However, as the New Year opens, prospects for supplying needed housing facilities are brighter than at any time since the need became urgent, thanks to the tireless efforts of E. S. Richardson, director of the Webster Council, and J. M. Pearce, assistant director of the Homes Registration Office.

These men, aided by the members of the Webster Council, have been hammering away in their efforts to get federal assistance in furnishing defense housing. They have met with numerous setbacks and discouragements, yet they have kept their faces toward their goal, until today two housing projects are assured.<sup>7</sup>

## II. RENT DIRECTOR

On June 23, 1942, less than a year after assuming his position as Executive Secretary to the Webster Council, E. S. Richardson resigned to accept a Federal post as Rent Director of the Minden area. Immediately upon his appointment he left for a conference of area rent directors, held in Chicago on June 25 and 26.<sup>8</sup>

When Richardson returned from Chicago, he set up an office in Minden with a full time attorney and clerical assistants. It became necessary to employ rent inspectors, in which capacity L. W. Ferguson served for a period of time before transferring to the district office in Shreveport. Richardson's major responsibility was to regulate or prohibit renting or leasing practices likely to result in rent increases. In that particular

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>News item in the Minden Herald, June 23, 1942.

job with all the multiple cases he had to deal with involving unpleasantness, everything was as fair and square as anybody would have it.<sup>9</sup>

L. W. Ferguson recalled that during the routine of rent control work in Minden, Superintendent E. W. Jones of Caddo Parish was ill and Richardson came into the office one day and said, "Ferguson, let's go over and see E. W. Jones, he's down sick." Mr. Ferguson related that, "We put everything down and went to his home in Shreveport. Ed Richardson spent a great deal of time during the visit trying to boost Jones' spirits, when he actually had only a few days to live."

### III. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIES

When Jimmy H. Davis was Governor of Louisiana, Richardson served as field representative with the Department of Commerce and Industries from the early months of 1946 until September of 1948. The new position with the state government returned Mr. and Mrs. Richardson to Baton Rouge where he had served many years before in agricultural extension. Mrs. Richardson always loved Baton Rouge and looked forward to their stay in the capital city. His work consisted of studies and surveys of the state's industrial and agricultural activities and resources.<sup>10</sup> Along with the studies and surveys, Richardson had the opportunity that he had long cherished to tell the people of Louisiana about their natural resources.

During the summer of 1946 on July 25 and 26, sixteen educators from Louisiana and Mississippi were among the speakers at the annual conference on curriculum improvement held at George Peabody College for Teachers in

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<sup>9</sup>Interview with L. W. Ferguson, January 9, 1965.

<sup>10</sup>Interview with Leland Richardson, a son of E. S. Richardson, July 15, 1965.



Nashville. The theme of the conference was listed as "Education for Peace," with the major purpose of helping teachers and administrators adjust the program of the public school to the changing conditions of a new age. E. S. Richardson, field representative for the Department of Commerce and Industries, was listed as one of the speakers. Other Louisiana speakers listed were William R. Cline, Dean of Northeast Center, Louisiana State University, Monroe; L. H. Dyson, Dean of Administration, Southeastern Louisiana College, Hammond; S. R. Emmons, Assistant State Director of Elementary Education, Baton Rouge; Sue Hefley, State Supervisor of School Libraries, Baton Rouge; and Clyde Mobley, State Supervisor of Home Economics, Baton Rouge.<sup>11</sup>

During the two and a half years with the Department of Commerce and Industries, he covered practically every nook and corner of the state, carrying his message concerning the resources and industrialization of the Pelican State.<sup>12</sup> Speaking before a Lions Club meeting in Shreveport, Richardson stated:

We Louisianians never get excited enough about anything to promote our state. The South is the poorest part of the nation, we need more cooperation of individuals to build this country. We must build industry and by doing so, we build Louisiana. We have enough salt to supply the world until the end of time; we have sulphur mines; more shrimp than any place in the world; furs by the thousands--the industry is as big as that of Canada; we have great cane and rice production, along with cotton shipped in the raw to other states and parts of the world, later to be purchased by us in the finished form. Louisiana ships raw materials around the world, and many times when we purchase the finished product, we pay for the processing and freight both ways.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>News item in the Times-Picayune [New Orleans] , July 14, 1946.

<sup>12</sup>News item in the Hammond Vindicator, April 9, 1948.

<sup>13</sup>News article in the Shreveport Times, October 9, 1946.

Continuing his talk, Richardson pointed out that,

In the east they know what button to push to throw us into confusion, perhaps political, and in doing so they get our raw materials while we are in a dither. We must get out of our somewhat complacent attitude and not expect God to give us more than 95 per cent and wait for the other five per cent from the government. It's high time we stand up and take credit for what we're doing. We're not taking care of our boys and girls as they go elsewhere for more attractive employment offers.

The farmer is no more the cause of our present condition than doctors, lawyers, and merchants. We must all cooperate in order to succeed in selling Louisiana to the rest of the United States. We must promote our potato industry and other industries. We must offer processed products. Get acquainted with Louisiana, we have everything to offer. We have a selling job to do.<sup>14</sup>

A few weeks following the Shreveport speaking engagement, Richardson spoke at a Rotary meeting in Mansfield urging new cash crops for DeSoto Parish. He mentioned the numerous cash crops being introduced into Louisiana, and outlined a program to make the land pay greater dividends to the farmers, thus putting more money into the pockets of the merchants, bankers and professional men. E. S. Richardson called attention to the group that cotton was fast getting away as the one big crop in Louisiana, and that one and all had to find new crops to take the place of the fleecy staple.<sup>15</sup>

He spoke in glowing terms of the sweet potato as a new cash crop and how in some places the potato had paid twice as much as the cotton crop. Not only could the standard grade and size of the sweet potato find a ready market, but the culls could be dehydrated and made into feed, which had already found a steady place in the feeding of cattle, both dairy and beef. This kind of feed was taking the place of Kansas corn, for which the DeSoto farmer was paying a dear price, considering the long haul and freight rates.

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>News item in the Shreveport Journal, November 2, 1946.

"In other words," stated Dr. Richardson, "raise our own feed and market it through fat hogs and cattle."<sup>16</sup>

Early in 1947 E. S. Richardson predicted that the sweet potato industry would revolutionize Louisiana's agriculture. "The potato is being grown and dehydrated in increasing volume both for human and animal consumption, and judging by the interest it is receiving from business men and farmers, it will within a few years become one of the leading agricultural monied crops," Dr. Richardson said. Richardson reported that numerous dehydrating plants were already in operation throughout Louisiana. He reported a unit being built in Shreveport, and units in operation at Sunset, Opelousas, Lafayette and Oak Grove.<sup>17</sup>

The November-December 1947 issue of the Sweet Potato Journal published in Atlanta, Georgia, reproduced a speech given at the fall Chemurgy Conference by E. S. Richardson, entitled "Sweet Potatoes and Dehydrating will Revolutionize Southern Agriculture in Next Few Years."<sup>18</sup> In his speech Richardson pointed out the fact that southern states were below the per capita income and that only twenty per cent of the nation's manufactured goods were produced in the South.

During the time that E. S. Richardson was field representative for the Department of Commerce and Industries, he exerted much effort to establish points of interest along Highway 80 that crossed Louisiana from Shreveport through Ruston and Monroe to Tallulah, and into Vicksburg, Mississippi.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>News item in the Shreveport Times, January 10, 1947.

<sup>18</sup>E. S. Richardson, "Sweet Potatoes and Dehydrating Will Revolutionize Southern Agriculture in Next Few Years," Sweet Potato Journal, November-December, 1947. (See Appendices.)

Speaking to the Rayville Kiwanis Club he noted that South Louisiana people had made efforts to attract tourist trade, but very little effort had been expended in North Louisiana. North Louisiana had limited accommodations for the reception of tourists, such as hotels, tourist camps, and other conveniences and shelter. It was the idea of Mr. Richardson to arouse the people to make investments that would remedy this hotel shortage. His address received an enthusiastic reception from the Rayville Kiwanians, and they pledged to lend assistance to the movement.<sup>19</sup>

Dr. Richardson's tenure of responsibility with the Department of Commerce and Industries was marred as he suffered the greatest loss of his life on Christmas Eve of the year 1947. It was on this date that Zenobia, Richardson's beloved wife and helpmate through his long years of educational service, passed suddenly from the labors of this world. She was laid to rest in the Roselawn Cemetery of Baton Rouge.<sup>20</sup>

From this time, it became obvious to those who were close to Dr. Richardson that a certain inspiration evident in his life through the years was now gone. He had depended upon Mrs. Richardson to help him with his clothes and provide the necessary pat on the back when his courage waned.<sup>21</sup> Now he would have to travel the road of life with that certain emptiness experienced numerous times by others.

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<sup>19</sup>News item in the Monroe Morning World, August 3, 1947.

<sup>20</sup>Mary Lou Sibley, The Richardsons and Kindred Families (Shreveport: E. T. Tobey Press, 1962), p. 36.

<sup>21</sup>Interview with D. L. Richardson, February 23, 1965.

#### IV. RICHARDSON RETURNS TO RUSTON

After Mrs. Richardson died, Dr. Richardson lived in Baton Rouge only a short time. On September 10, 1948, he notified Mr. P. C. Rogers of the retirement system that he had moved back to Ruston.<sup>22</sup> He returned to Ruston to live out the balance of his days among his friends, the kind home and school loving people he knew best. In the shadows of the college that he had grown to love, he resided with his daughter Ruth.

During Richardson's earlier days in Ruston he had been an active member of the Kiwanis Club which was for a number of years the only civic club in town. Later, the Rotary Club was organized, but Mr. Richardson was a Kiwanian. In the later days of his life, the Ruston Rotary Club elected him to honorary membership, the first time that the club had ever extended this honor. This made him eligible to attend meetings whenever he found it convenient to do so.<sup>23</sup> Dr. H. J. Sachs would pick him up at his home on occasions and drive him to the meetings. Richardson often made a joke of the fact that he was possibly the only person living that had a PhD. for a chauffeur.<sup>24</sup>

#### V. PRESIDENT EMERITUS OF LOUISIANA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

On April 11, 1949, Mr. Raymond Heard, recalling that Richardson had refused the position of President Emeritus of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute upon his removal in 1941, moved that the State Board of Education bestow the honor again. Mr. Heard stated that Richardson had served the State in

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<sup>22</sup>Letter from E. S. Richardson to P. C. Rogers, September 10, 1948.

<sup>23</sup>Interview with R. H. Mount, February 10, 1965.

<sup>24</sup>Interview with H. J. Sachs, February 11, 1965.

the educational field in a most constructive manner for fifty-one years.

He was one of the pioneers in public school development in Louisiana and has served as teacher, principal, superintendent, college professor and college president and has rendered very distinctive services in all of these capacities. I think the State does itself honor to honor him. It gives me great pleasure and gratification to make this recommendation.<sup>25</sup>

The motion was passed unanimously and Louisiana Polytechnic Institute authorities were directed to pay President Emeritus Richardson the sum of \$100.00 a month beginning the first month of the 1949 calendar year.<sup>26</sup>

During the last year of his life, Dr. E. S. Richardson, President Emeritus of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, wrote a speech entitled "Creating a Better Understanding Between Racial Groups." Richardson's insight into basic racial problems and ideas for solutions seemed to be far ahead of most leaders in the South of that day.<sup>27</sup>

Mr. Richardson loved the game of football very much. He attended several games during his last two years of life in Ruston. Sometimes when he would miss a game due to illness, Coach Joe Aillet would go to his home or to the hospital and show the film of some of the games he had missed. He enjoyed this very much.<sup>28</sup>

L. W. Ferguson recalled seeing E. S. Richardson in the lobby of a hotel in Baton Rouge during the last few months of his life. "He was still jovial and had a bright outlook on life."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>"Official Proceedings of the State Board of Education, Baton Rouge," April 11, 1949, pp. 40-41.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>E. S. Richardson, "Creating a Better Understanding Between Racial Groups," Ruston. (See Appendices.)

<sup>28</sup>Interview with Joe Aillet, February 11, 1965.

<sup>29</sup>Interview with L. W. Ferguson, January 9, 1965.

During the last two years in Ruston, Mr. Richardson was in and out of the hospital several times and each time he came out he seemed to have a new outlook. He never talked like a man who foresaw the eminence of death, nor did he sit around and fear death. He had an immeasurable amount of courage. He definitely had a tremendous amount of faith in God. He tended to be rather impatient with doctrinal hair splitting and division within religious groups. His religious beliefs were somewhat like his beliefs in education, government, or anything else. The most important necessity was to fasten attention on the big broad principles and live by them.<sup>30</sup>

#### VI. DEATH OF EDWIN SANDERS RICHARDSON

On Wednesday, October 11, 1950<sup>31</sup> at five o'clock in the afternoon Edwin Sanders Richardson passed to his final reward, thus ending, on earth, a long and useful life devoted to others, with few thoughts except to serve the cause of education and the advancement of the opportunities for the boys and girls of his beloved state. Although Dr. Richardson's health had not been good for several months, his death was somewhat of a shock to his many friends and relatives. Only the Saturday night before, he had attended a football game between Louisiana Tech and Stephen F. Austin.<sup>32</sup>

Funeral services were held on Friday, October 13, at 9:30 a.m. at the First Baptist Church in Ruston. The remains were carried to Baton Rouge

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<sup>30</sup>Interview with H. J. Sachs, February 11, 1965.

<sup>31</sup>News item in the Shreveport Times, October 12, 1950.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

and interred in Roselawn Cemetery beside his wife. In respect to the memory of former President Richardson, all classes at Louisiana Tech were dismissed between 9:00 and 11:00 on the morning of the funeral.<sup>33</sup>

Upon Dr. Richardson's death, a friend, recalling Richardson's promotional abilities, described him as "a man who could plant a bush and make people believe he had started a national forest." It was Richardson's promotional ability that gave Louisiana Polytechnic Institute a new lease on life in the late thirties.<sup>34</sup>

Editorially, the Ruston Daily Leader paid tribute to Edwin Sanders Richardson on October 13, 1950. The editorial follows:

#### E. S. RICHARDSON

E. S. Richardson, past president of Louisiana Tech, was one of the best loved men in North Louisiana. All friends of the college will mourn the passing of a strong man as one of the most ardent fighters for the advancement of southern education, goes to his rest.

Mr. Ed was a builder, a master politician, an educator and one of those rare leaders of men who manage to be loved while they help others do a good job. Tech enjoyed one of its greatest periods of spasmodic growth during the eight years he was its head. He boosted all departments of the college, adding several and increasing enrollment to a then all time high.

He came to Ruston with a long list of accomplishments as a parish superintendent and before that as a pioneer in visual education, where he visited remote sections of Louisiana and helped to bring LSU into its eminent place. For about four years the campus resembled a battleground more than it did a college, while old buildings were demolished, new ones built, and the entire face of the school changed. His activity among Ruston civic clubs will be remembered with pleasure, as the town and the school grew together.

Mr. Richardson called Ruston 'the home of presidents,' when he returned to live out his days here among his friends, the kind, home and school loving people he knew best. He

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<sup>33</sup>News item in the Ruston Daily Leader, October 12, 1950.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.



refused to stay indoors and beautified his hillside house himself; he continually visited among his business friends and associates and only lately took a post with the newly organized 'Greater Tech Club.'

His work to build national interest in north Louisiana along Highway 80, will bear lasting fruit, and stands as evidence of his boundless energy. Ruston lost a fine, good man in President Richardson, and one we will do well to imitate.<sup>35</sup>

J. Ed Howe, a long-time friend and booster of E. S. Richardson wrote a letter to the editor of the Shreveport Times on October 16, 1950, praising Richardson's life as an educator. The letter stated that:

Dr. Richardson was an honorable man, a gentleman of the old school; he needed no bond to guarantee his integrity. . . . As administrator of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute at Ruston, that school became a passion with him. He took over its direction at a time when it was without an administration building because of a fire. The school was at about the lowest ebb in its history. He inaugurated a building program that made it into one of the best fitted out educational plants in the state.

While he handled hundreds of thousands of dollars to finance a major building construction program, other Louisiana school men and numbers of politicians were being trailed by subpoena servers. At no time did the finger of suspicion ever point to Ed. Richardson

. . . . He was a good man, much abused. Peace be to his soul.<sup>36</sup>

When the State Board of Education met on December 18, 1950, Mr. Robert Curry moved that the Board adopt the following resolution:

Whereas Mr. E. S. Richardson, Late President Emeritus of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, was called by death on October 11, 1950; and

Whereas Mr. Richardson served the schools of Louisiana with distinction during his thirty-eight years as an educator: Therefore be it

Resolved, that the Louisiana State Board of Education, in session December 18, 1950, does hereby express its regret at the loss of this outstanding educator; and be

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<sup>35</sup>Editorial in the Ruston Daily Leader, October 13, 1950.

<sup>36</sup>Letter from J. Ed Howe to the Editor of the Shreveport Times, October 16, 1950.

Resolved further, that the Secretary of this Board is hereby directed to furnish a copy of this expression of sympathy to the family of Mr. E. S. Richardson and to the press.<sup>37</sup>

E. S. Richardson was a man who reached a philosophy of life early in life and never waivered from the broad principles. Having reached firm conclusions about these principles he was not essentially introspective or anything of the introvert. "Let's be up and doing--these are the things we believe in, these are the goals we need to reach, let's go out and work for them." With conviction, fervor, and force, he pushed for these goals to the very end. He was a prophet, a leader, a man of vision, a man of right character, and a man whose influence for good in education has been incalculable.<sup>38</sup>

Among the scrapbook collections of Edwin Sanders Richardson were several pages devoted to proverbs, poems, and words of wisdom. Centered on one of these pages was the poem, "Compensation." Evidently, Edwin Sanders Richardson read this poem many times, for his life seemed to be patterned from the thoughts found therein. The poem follows:

COMPENSATION  
By Edgar A. Guest

I'd like to think when life is done  
That I had filled a needed post,  
That here and there I'd paid my fare  
With more than idle talk and boast;  
That I had taken gifts divine,  
The breath of life and manhood fine,  
And tried to use them now and then  
In service for my fellow men.

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<sup>37</sup>"Official Proceedings of the State Board of Education, Baton Rouge," December 18, 1950.

<sup>38</sup>Interview with H. J. Sachs, February 11, 1965.

I'd hate to think when life is through  
 That I had lived my round of years  
 A useless kind, that leaves behind  
 No record in this vale of tears;  
 That I had wasted all my days  
 By treading only selfish ways.  
 And that this world would be the same  
 If it had never known my name.

I'd like to think that here and there  
 When I am gone, there shall remain  
 A happier spot that might have not  
 Existed had I toiled for gain;  
 That some one's cheery voice and smile  
 That I had paid with something fine  
 My debt to God for life divine.<sup>39</sup>

The last and final tribute was paid to Edwin Sanders Richardson in the January 1951 issue of Louisiana Schools.<sup>40</sup> Edwin Sanders Richardson's name was listed among forty-five other teachers who had passed away during the year. In dedication, Job 1:21 from the Old Testament of the Holy Bible was given:

The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away;  
 blessed be the name of the Lord.

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<sup>39</sup>Edgar A. Guest, "Compensation." From the scrapbook of E. S. Richardson.

<sup>40</sup>"Memorial Service," Louisiana Schools (January, 1951).

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I

### RECOLLECTIONS OF THOSE WHO KNEW RICHARDSON

S. G. Lucky, former Superintendent of Morehouse Parish School System, recalled on February 17, 1965 that he attended school under E. S. Richardson in Bienville Parish.

My dad was school board member of Bienville Parish when E. S. Richardson was principal of Bienville High School. I graduated from Bienville in 1909 and my brother, later to be known as Dr. L. B. Lucky of L.S.U., graduated about 1911. I remember that many times I sat in one of those double seats in the assembly room during class. I would sit with an older boy many times. Professor Richardson believed in teaching boys and girls something practical. Each week he gave every student some type job for him to be responsible for. One week it was my duty to ring the bell at the close of each period. I had never really mastered this job of telling time, so I had to depend on my seat partner to remind me when the period was over. One day the older boy I was sitting with told me to ring the bell fifteen minutes too early. Willie had gotten perturbed at me for not helping him with his arithmetic. Just as I reached for the rope, he stopped me. This made it imperative that I learn to tell time.

Punch Cooper and I were sent for the mail each day and we would always buy a nickel's worth of candy. When we would return to class, we would eat it just to see if we could get by with it. Boy! it would be 'Sad Sam' if the Professor ever caught us. I guess I was lucky, he never caught me.

The Professor was the best I have ever known for teaching mathematics. He was very practical and would use every device available for figuring volume, board feet, etc.

Possibly the most unique thing about his teaching was the way he taught spelling. Every one in high school took spelling at the same time. Each day every student had to keep a record of words missed. When Friday would come around, each student had to stand before the group in the assembly room and spell orally all the words missed during the week. Of course this was mighty hard on some of the slower students, for they couldn't learn them all.

We had debating societies, school chorus, regular assemblies and all the extras for that day. At assembly programs, the Professor always had a fifteen minute speech to give to the student body built around national holidays,

school spirit, loyalty and student goals. He would talk students into having garden projects at home. He was a many-sided fellow and an excellent speaker, even though he would talk too long some times. Singing was compulsory--he would tell us we needed a little music in our system.

The Professor was never sick. It was told on him that each morning before school he would get into a tub of cold water. He was always emphasizing the necessity of bathing and keeping healthy.

Edwin Sanders Richardson was well thought of in Bienville. He had a job to do and he was going to do it, no matter how people felt about him. He never went to any extent to get people to change their mind about him. If they were mad at him, he just kept right on going.

A number of years later when he came to Bastrop talking to civic clubs about commerce and industries in Louisiana, he talked as if this was the only thing that counted. That's the way he was in every endeavor he undertook.

Mrs. O. L. Boddie, housewife and citizen of Bryceland, Louisiana, recalled on January 25, 1965 some of Richardson's qualities as a teacher and principal of Bienville High School.

I remember Mr. Richardson as being an outstanding teacher and educator. He created in my mind a deep appreciation for literature. He was a patriot--a man with a keen sense of honor. He appreciated that in his students. He believed that boys and girls should love their country. He wanted people to appreciate what they had and to use it to the fullest. He was very impatient with people discrediting our past countrymen. He wanted people to use their brain for something, to try to do something, to try to give to the world something worthwhile.

He encouraged the boys and girls to stay in school and graduate. He tried to show them how it would help their earning power in later years and how it could make them more useful citizens. One year at graduation he had the only two boys in the graduating class to stand, telling the parents to take a good look at them. He used this as an opportunity to rake the parents over the coals for not requiring other boys to stay in school and graduate.

In the town of Bienville, Mr. Richardson was highly appreciated. He was a man that expected loyalty to the school. He used to say, 'If a student was worthy, he didn't mind praising him, if he wasn't, he didn't mind raising him.'

I was in Professor Richardson's home on several occasions as a child. He was very courteous to all he met and courteous to his family. I remember as a child seeing him tip his hat to Mrs. Richardson. I thought that was really something, him tipping his hat to his wife. The children of the area grew to love Mr. Richardson's wife during the time he served in Bienville.

People either liked him very much or they disliked him very much. There was no middle ground about it, because he was just that sort of an individual. He had strong convictions and he could stand up and be counted. You never had a doubt about how he stood.

Mr. Richardson established the first library in the Bienville school. Bienville was a rural school and not accredited at the time he was there, and he seemed to be working toward this end. He encouraged the boys and girls to read and not to select a book because of the color of its cover. The first library consisted of bookcases across the back of the room in which he taught. He built a fence-like affair around it and had two pupils who sat in the back of the room to help check out books.

He would tell us how the South had been exploited following the Civil War and how the timber had been bought from the people for only a small portion of its value. He did all he could to warn people of this kind of thing. He said that some day we would have roads built by taxation, instead of cooperative work days. The farmers didn't like to hear about this. He also told them that some day they would have trucks to haul produce to market over improved roads.

W. C. Abbott, Sr., Mrs. William Swart, W. H. Balis, B. W. Baker and T. A. Green were co-workers of E. S. Richardson during his years in Agricultural Extension. They recalled those days as follows:

W. C. Abbott, Sr.:

We all enjoyed working with Mr. Richardson very much. He was older than most of us working with him and we had some very difficult roads to travel in those days. The younger fellows would have a great deal of fun when we would get stuck in the mud which happened on every trip a good many times. Mr. Richardson would get out, take off his coat and get us all enthused and say, 'Alright boys, let's go.' He depended on most of us younger boys to do most of the pushing. I'm a great admirer of Mr. Richardson because so many pleasant memories go back to our associations.

Mrs. William Swart:

I was State Home Demonstration Agent from 1916 to 1920 and knew Mr. Richardson as an associate. He was a jolly individual and was well respected and liked by all of his co-workers.

I remember attending an agricultural meeting across the river from Baton Rouge one night. I was to speak about Girls' Club Work and Mr. Richardson about Boys' Club Work. We got back to Port Allen after the ferry had stopped running and had to wait until 4:00 in the morning before we could cross the river.

Mr. Richardson was easy to talk to. He was very aggressive in his work and many times this wasn't an asset because people were very set in their ways. He had a way of continually working and driving and making things happen, thus causing considerable progress.

W. H. Balis:

I came to Louisiana State University in 1911 from Chesbrough, Louisiana. Mr. Richardson came the same year and we worked together until October 1919.

Richardson was director of the program and I was his assistant in charge of Pib Clubs.

At first I was also in charge of all agriculture departments in various high school of Louisiana. It was my duty to help secure qualified teachers for agriculture departments and recommend them to local school people.

Richardson and I worked closely together. He was such a good speaker that he did most of the talking when we went into the school.



During our service together there was talk of moving the University to a new site. The University was poorly equipped and needed additional facilities. We were having a Farmers' Institute during a hot political campaign. Rich and I thought this would be a good time to get the candidates for governor together and let them tell what they were going to do for Louisiana State University. Rich and I sent each of them a telegram, telling them that this was their opportunity. They came and each had a plan. The future Governor John M. Parker came and told of his plans to move the University and build a new one.

For our trips into the state we had state railroad passes. We would leave on Monday and come back on Friday. The parish superintendent would usually pick us up in a horse and buggy and carry us to the various schools.

We would travel as much as 25,000 miles a year by rail. Of course, much time was spent traveling in our current-producing vehicles after 1915. Our work on the state basis was much like the county agents' work is today on the parish basis.

Richardson liked to fish, but would never let it detract from his job. T. H. Harris and Richardson were close together when he worked in agricultural extension and Richardson would often josh Harris about picking the loser in most governor's races.

B. W. Baker:

I remember Mr. Richardson as a very affable, well informed man. He was an excellent public speaker and a very interesting conversationalist. I recall a favorite story that he enjoyed telling 4-H Club members, leaders and parents at various meetings. The story went something like this: 'There were four boys in a particular family. The father and mother were talking one day about what they would try to do for their four sons. The father said that George was smart and would be sent to college to study law. He would make a good lawyer. Jim was also smart, so they would make a doctor out of him by sending him off to medical school. Henry was very studious and learned easily so he would be sent to college to make a teacher. John was dull so they decided not to send him to college, but let him be a farmer. E. S. Richardson said that this was the idea that prevailed when he was a boy. We all know now, he would say, that the successful farmer must be smart and well educated too.'

T. A. Green:

When the group from agricultural extension traveled over the state, E. S. Richardson was always an inspiration and kept everyone's spirits on a high plane. If trips

necessitated Sunday travel and he was along, he would call everyone together at Sunday School time and talk about the Sunday School lesson. I don't think I ever heard Mr. Richardson tell a story or use a word that he couldn't use or tell in any parlor or society.

## APPENDIX II

### SPEECHES BY E. S. RICHARDSON DURING RETIREMENT FROM EDUCATION

#### Looking for Southern Know-How

The sixteen southern states represent not only one-third of the states in number, but they comprise one-third of the area of the nation. Twenty-eight per cent of the people live in the South. Yet, as a region we receive only 24 per cent of the nation's income. The average per capita income in the is \$703, or 70 per cent of the national average, \$1,117. The latest figures show that the South produces only 20 per cent of the nation's manufactured goods.

Yet at the same time we have great riches of untapped resources that can be developed by coordinating scientific research and a willingness on the part of our leaders to foster business enterprises. In the past the South has lacked capital and credit. However, today, our banks all over the South are filled to the rafters. Our potentialities that have been so long neglected can now be realized. Why wait on our Federal Government or for eastern capital?

The South has an abundance of things the nation needs. Its vast store of raw materials--forest, mineral, and agricultural; its extensive power resources--water, coal, oil and natural gas; its ample transportation facilities--rail, water, and air; and its varied climate, could make the South a tremendous trader with the rest of the nation.

Its growing population, with vast needs and desires, now largely unfilled, could keep a large part of the rest of the country supplying them. Such a relationship would help the South and the rest of the nation. Both have lost because this relationship does not exist.

The South has been called the fresh food basket of the United States. To date, our methods of getting this food to its destination are inefficient, and as a result large amounts of fresh foods go to waste. The heavy rainfall and the long summers are conducive to storing away in our growing plants large amounts of vitamins that human beings and animals need.

We have been able, as one-crop cotton farmers, to stay well fed during the summer months, but as soon as front falls our vitamin source is at an end. Beef cattle begin to get thin, dairy cattle fall off in milk production, and some human beings in the South get hungry for foods that have gone to waste because of cold weather. We have little provision for permanent food pantries for winter needs.

This seeming lethargy and lack of initiative on our part may be partly due to our traditional stereotyped, handed-down method of education that we have been subjected to for generations past. It may be necessary to revamp our educational objectives, so that when a pupil finishes high school or college he will know about our possibilities and how to develop them.

The South has produced some of our greatest men; however, the great mass of people seem not to realize the possibility of what the South has for profitable development. Perhaps we have been more interested in academic degrees and the meaning of Carnegie Units than in the distorted methods of our economic life.

We have produced great lawyers, doctors, and other professional men, but few men who KNOW-HOW--who are practical men of affairs. It may be necessary to inaugurate a new type of education for present day needs. In fact, we in the South have been idly sleeping on fields of hidden treasures.

A business man said recently that he realized that our schools are costing an increasing sum of money, but was in doubt as to the quality of its product. We are still trying to run all children, regardless of background, talent, and interest, through the same mill.

It is an unfortunate state of affairs for those who are unqualified to become professional people! This number represents about 85% of the people who are in schools and colleges. This situation prevails all over the nation to an extent, but we in the South are the greatest sufferers.

If we expect our children to share bountifully in the new economic way of life we need a different type of training. Louisiana's prosperity, along with that of other southern states, must be created by turning the products of our oil, forests, and farms into manufactured goods. This can be done only by those who KNOW-HOW.

The South's prodigality in not preparing for the winter season has caused the people of the North and Northwest to furnish us concentrated carbohydrate food and feed to the tune of about five hundred million dollars per year. Louisiana's contribution to this pantry deficiency is thirty-five million dollars--a living example on a big scale of the 'Ant and the Grasshopper' of Aesop's Fables.

We have been buying our concentrated carbohydrate feed so long from the North and Northwest that we are entirely accustomed to it. Visit any country town in Louisiana and you will find sacks of concentrated feed piled high on the sidewalks in front of all stores, possibly with the exception of drug stores and banks.

The South can no longer expect to raise beef cattle, pork, and produce milk successfully under such economic conditions. As long as this method of exchange prevails, the South will continue to be classed as the Nation's Economic Problem No. 1.

It is not a joy to call attention to this woeful situation, but nevertheless it is true. When we go to a restaurant

we call for Kansas City steak. Our milk and milk products come from cold Wisconsin. I interviewed a creamery manager in one of our north Louisiana towns. I asked him where he was getting his milk supply. He said that it came by rail from Kansas. I further inquired why he did not buy raw milk from farmers in that community.

His reply was that the frost had killed the grass and that they had no concentrated feed for the cattle. He unloaded the Kansas milk from the train, took it to the creamery, and, after separating, he reshipped the cream to one of our leading colleges in Louisiana. Can we expect to get ahead in the South on such transactions as this?

One answer to this problem may be found in a recent development which is proving to be one of the greatest movements in the South's economic life--dehydration. Dehydration of foods is not new. The Egyptians carried on this process centuries ago. Farmers and farmers' wives have long understood that to extract water from fruits and vegetables is desirable. Little progress, however, has been made in the matter of mechanizing the process and at the same time retaining the flavors and vitamins in the dried product.

World War II made it necessary to develop dehydration on a commercial scale. Our armies and the armies of our allies needed food which the South produced, but which was too bulky and perishable to send long distances. It became necessary that mechanization be applied to dehydration in order that our soldiers and allies could be furnished with nutritious food in smaller packages which still retained all the food values that existed before dehydration. Several of these plants were located in Louisiana; probably 12 or 15 were in operation during the war.

Since that time the industry has expanded tremendously; now there are at least 70 such plants, and the number is growing daily. Many products are being dehydrated, most important of all the sweet potato for food and for feed. Other products are Johnson grass, alfalfa, shrimp hulls, and now even chicory from Michigan--which you might call an experiment in reverse lend-lease.

It is too early to predict accurately the meaning in dollars and cents to the South's economic life, but the movement is believed in and backed by dozens of pioneering men who see the possibilities. In my personal opinion, it will revolutionize southern agriculture in the next few years.

A part of my effort as a field man for the Louisiana Department of Commerce and Industry has been to convince bankers that loans made to sweet potato growers is as secure as money advanced to cotton growers. As to the value of the sweet potato crop, in one cotton-growing parish in Louisiana, one banker stated that the sweet potato crop of 1945 was four hundred thousand dollars, more than twice the value of any cotton crop that the parish had ever produced.

Louisiana manufacturers now are shipping dehydrators into other states. In fact, the old order of buying manu-

factured machinery from the North has been reversed and they are now shipping dehydrators to the North. This is another example of KNOW-HOW.

Mechanized dehydration is a long step in the solution of the South's feed problem. I wish to quote from a letter from a farmer written to the Department of Commerce and Industry at Baton Rouge.

I think these small units, possibly run in connections with cotton gins throughout the county, will be one of the greatest things that could happen to our farmers. Any animal eats dehydrated potatoes (chickens, cows, hogs, mules, etc.). In addition, your dried potatoes will never spoil. Stock like it, even though it is several years old; and up to now, no weevil or insect bothers it.

I worked my mules nearly a whole crop year on potatoes and hay. I could see no difference in their work or condition against corn. My yield on potatoes here in sandy soil has been 375 bushels per acre. When we know three bushels of potatoes are equivalent to one bushel of corn, you can see the enormous gain. I know of very few plots of corn that yield 125 bushels per acre.

The former executive director of the Department of Commerce and Industry recently has invested one quarter million dollars in a potato plant in Shreveport. This is a new venture by a far-seeing businessman. He has installed two dehydrators in his plant. He has also mechanized the handling of sweet potatoes. This investment demonstrates his faith in the future of sweet potatoes and dehydration of carbohydrate feed.

'The Following item appeared in the October 26 issue of Liberty Magazine:

'The State of Louisiana is justly proud of the juicy golden red yam. They are the only sweet potatoes sold nationally, and they contain more vitamin A than any other type of potato. According to Rose's FOUNDATIONS OF NUTRITION, a sweet potato weighing only 80 grams contains 2,025 units of vitamin A, while the white potato weighing half again as much contains only 45 units of vitamin A, which is the vitamin that helps resist infection.

'This yam also contains vitamin B-1 for growth, vitamin B-2 for appetite, vitamin C for good teeth, minerals for bone building and carbohydrates for energy. Richer in natural sugars than any other sweet potato, yams store their sugar right under the skin, where it quickly 'caramelizes' during baking, thus improving flavor and texture.

'Being sweeter and moister than other potatoes, yams require less butter and seasoning. They bake well, and they also play a major role in many succulent casserole dishes, pies, puddings and breads.'

A really promising future for sweet potatoes lies in their use as fermentation materials and as a source of starch. In prewar days, stated Dr. Julian Miller of Louisiana State University, from 12 to 15 million dollars worth of root starch was imported annually.

For the past several years experiments conducted by government workers at Laurel Starch Plant, Laurel, Mississippi, have shown that a high quality starch could be made from sweet potatoes and that starch produced from sweet potatoes was more efficient for certain purposes than that produced from other sources.

In the South the textile mills and paper mills are using large quantities of starch, and it is hoped that a portion of the starch used by these industries might be manufactured from sweet potatoes.

There are still other uses of the sweet potato. Large quantities of pectin are being used in the manufacture of marmalades and jellies; however, at present most of this is being manufactured from apples, and still the demand is greater than the supply. The sweet potato is rich in this mineral, and it could be easily processed from sweet potatoes. Experimental work is now under way to produce pectin at a number of our larger laboratories.

Carotene is one of the rich sources of vitamin A and in great demand for fortifying foods. Sweet potatoes should be one of the best sources of carotene. Several varieties of sweet potatoes now produce as much carotene per pound as do carrots.

The carotene should be produced as a by-product from other manufactured products made from sweet potatoes, particularly sweet potatoes going into alcohol or feed, as all the carotene possessed the the potatoes would not be necessary in these products.

In a speech at Memphis, former Governor Arnall of Georgia said, 'The South must break the bonds of poverty by better education, better health, industrial expansion, and improved farming.'

In the tremendous development of the sweet potato and other crops, together with the accompanying growth of the dehydration industry, we see the South's double advance toward these goals of industrial expansion and improved farming.

Leaders in research like Dr. Miller, leaders in practical agriculture like the Louisiana Sweet Potato Association members, and bankers and business men of vision everywhere are combining their efforts to rebuild the temple of the South's prosperity.

### Creating a Better Understanding Between Racial Groups

Ignorance and Prejudice, coupled with 'handed down' or inherited misinformation, have caused most of the trouble between the races in the South. A general lack of understanding of the truth concerning the whole question should no longer govern or be used to justify our actions. Outcomes or results constitute the criteria here, regardless of motive. Our good intentions, based on either misinformation or ignorance regarding this problem, are no longer held as valid reasons or excuses for our procedure in the minds of unbiased and thinking people. 'Good intentions, let us remember, lit many a funeral pyre in the days of the Inquisition. They are quite capable of doing it still, and I doubt not they sometimes do in some of our twentieth century American burnings at the stake. We need more than piety to fit us to live like human beings. We must have intelligence as well, and that is the job of education. The colleges and the public schools must take up the task and take it up vigorously if we hope ever to achieve the goal.'

The following concrete suggestions are presented, in the light of observation and experience, as possible approaches to this problem which is recognized by every fair-minded Southerner. 'To argue the presence of peculiar educational problem in the South as a result of a bi-racial population would be to evade the question. To deny it would be to ignore existent facts. To face it and be concerned over the large problem and the numerous subsidiary ones is to give thought to a vital question which the South must solve intelligently before her fullest and fairest destiny may be attained. The solution to the problem of bringing the Southern educational program to a position of equality with that of the other sections of the nation is not clearly discerned. Any successful program must grow up indigenously, coming out of the life and background of the people and the institutions most vitally related to the problems now evident or which may appear in the future. The degree of success of our Southern civilization will be proportionate to the success we have in properly solving the educational problems resulting from the bi-racial population.'

Politics and emotion have guided the policies in the field of racial relations long enough. It is not a matter to be handled longer as a sociological problem, fit only for theorizing. It must be faced as an educational problem. Why not make the problem of race relationship a public school topic for both races? Why not have subject matter introduced in the early elementary grades and continued through the high schools and colleges of the South? Frankly and flatly it is proposed that factual material on the subject be carefully worked out by capable persons and endorsed by a committee composed of well-known, fair-minded Southerners of both races for use as content material in the schools. Such a committee should be composed of men who are keenly and sympathetically interested



in the problem. The official endorsement of material by such a committee would tend to establish its reliability or authenticity in the minds of the thinking people of both races and would tend to give it easy passport into the public schools and colleges. Such a plan would clarify or eliminate many acute racial problems now pending, perhaps caused from a general lack of understanding and veracious information concerning the aims and ideals of the better elements of both races. If such factual material were available and placed in courses of study and in our libraries, it would be much easier for teachers interested in the racial problem to emphasize the constructive means of solution.

There should be a further extension of inter-racial committees in each state and community for promotion and publicity purposes. Their duties should be made known not only to the teachers and children in our schools but through the schools to the people of the entire community. The community should know that its local committee, county or city, had been carefully selected and that any racial trouble would be immediately taken up with the purpose of amicable adjustment. With a committee of this kind properly functioning in every county no person or group of persons would feel that he were called on to take the law into his own hands. Such a definite plan would give a better understanding as to methods of procedure in the settlement of all racial difficulties. Ultimately, under arrangements of this kind a wholesome public sentiment should develop to the point that society would not countenance rash racial crimes. After all, sentiment governs the conduct of a community.

Educational material endorsed by such a committee should have for its main objective the harmonious relation of the races in their normal development. Evidence through factual data would teach that one race has no right to retard the development of the other. The outstanding achievements or services of either race should at all times be recognized by both. 'The schools might explode the belief that Negroes have had no worthy part in American Life. Our school histories, unfortunately tend to confirm that error. The Negro, as they present him, has been only a disturbing factor in America, an alien menace set down in the midst of a high degree of civilization, the center and source of political turbulence, the cause of our greatest national tragedy, a threat to civilization in re-construction days, and nothing but a menace still. In all that, of course, there is a measure of truth; but it is by no means the whole story.' History 'might show us the Negro among the sixteenth century explorers of America--with Columbus as the pilot of the Nina, with Balboa when he first glimpsed the Pacific, with Menendez at the founding of St. Augustine. It might tell us of dusky Revolutionary heroes who served with distinction at Bunder Hill, at the Battle of Long Island, at Point Bridge, at Monmouth those 3,000 altogether who fought with Washington for the freedom of America.' (Ibid., 8) Certainly the dissemination of such factual information would in no way harm either race. Through

designed educational effort Negroes should be made thoroughly cognizant of the fact that individual achievement by a few of their race does not mean that the race as a whole is making satisfactory progress. Individual achievement is very fine; but the Negro should be led to realize that the job of racial growth and development is a cooperative service which should challenge every member of his race. The Negro race needs above all else cooperative effort. Both races have been inclined to magnify unduly the achievements of colored individuals endowed with special abilities who have won fame away from home who perhaps never contributed anything worthwhile toward the uplift of their own race. The public should measure a Negro's achievement in proportion to the service he renders both to his own race and to humanity. Intelligent, orderly, cooperative effort is conducive to the proper growth and development of any people; but a lack of opportunity in the past makes it now more important to the Negro. Slavery and its appurtenances have deprived the Negro of the privilege of cultural development. Racial weakness due to the lack of cooperative growth and the cause for the same should be constantly kept before all leaders.

Concrete lessons in citizenship should be extended by giving the Negro an opportunity to actually practice the art. This can be done by permitting him to manage his own affairs. Certainly intelligent supervision should be extended in an advisory way regarding his farm and his school organization. There should be organized in every county a Negro county welfare association made up of local school organizations. The aim and purposes of the same should be first, to promote better schools, better homes, better health, better community living, etc., and second, to train Negro leaders. They should be permitted to set up their own objectives, evaluate and make reports on their progress and attainments. The success of the organization should rest largely with them. 'Webster Parish School Patrons' Welfare Association' of Louisiana during the year 1925 turned in to the parish school board \$6,000.00 in cash which came from the proceeds of their cooperative farm projects. 1926, the same organization made eighty bales of cotton. This organization meets semi-annually and makes up yearly objectives. It has function successfully in helping to build Negro schools, homes, etc. During the drought of 1930 this organization learned the importance of cooperation in the matter of conserving food by community canning. During the year 1931 they produced and conserved \$200,000.00 worth of food and food products.

A better racial feeling can be brought about by recognizing the fact that the Negro of the South produces a major part of all crops. He should be encouraged through community county, and state fairs. Ample separate space should be allotted to him and recognition extended to him through premiums and the press. Thus, the white people could know more about the good people of the black race, and the best black people could know more about the best white people.

The best representatives in both races should accept every opportunity to work with groups of the other race. In speaking or talking to Negroes, it has been the habit of some white men to say or infer that they know all about the Negro. To be entirely fair, Southerners should remember that at times they have become opinionated to an extent that authentic evidence has made little or no change in attitudes toward the race problem. As a result of the past peculiar relationship there have perhaps developed certain racial complexes or idiosyncrasies in both races which are fully known by open-minded Southerners. On the other hand, a personal knowledge developed by past association and present conditions makes the racial problem fundamentally a Southern problem. Persons who have not had this peculiar background cannot speak with final authority on this problem. Southerners--white and colored without question hold the key, if there be one, to the racial problem.

Because of the proximity to the situation, we have failed to realize the importance of the economic side of this question. No section of the country can develop in a wholesome way when a large percent of its people are poor. This growing economic ill cannot be cured politically. 'Negroes for the time being have been largely eliminated from politics in the South. They still remain a major factor in Southern poverty. The low purchasing power of the Negro population makes the South a poor market for the products of its own factories and causes outside producers to consider it the poorest market in the nation. Every dream of economic emancipation for the South has been impossible of realization, for every such dream has failed to include Negroes as an economic factor in Southern development. The South has continued to apply a political remedy to one of its major economic ills.'

Segregation of the races is a wise provision, but it has been very greatly abused in that when segregation has been effected the Negroes have been neglected. Segregation becomes a serious problem when considered in the light of necessary protection to the two races. What town or city in the deep South can point with pride to its so-called 'Negro quarters'? These sections are usually breeding places for all types of death-dealing germs that know no racial distinction. 'The cause of all human suffering is disease, poverty, and sin. The mother of these is ignorance. The cause of human happiness in the world is health, wealth, and righteousness, and the parent of these is wisdom. If ignorance and her children, disease, poverty, and sin shall win, then we are headed to the pest house, the poor house, and the penitentiary. If wisdom and her offsprings of health, wealth, and righteousness shall conquer, then we may look forward to physical well being, economic production, and social fitness.'

Some plan of cooperative effort should be worked out whereby lay members, working in religious organizations, would extend the work of missions to Negroes in their own vicinity. This service should be offered in such a way as

to convince the Negroes of the community that the interest in them is prompted solely by religious motives. For the white church to pose as a giver at all times and not to recognize that the Negroes have something to give in return would ultimately break down, even though the motive behind the service were a righteous one. In some places in the South this is being done. 'Not long ago a Southern city was planning to conduct a religious survey. At first the plans seemed to include only the churches for white people. Very soon, however, it was seen that the 10,000 Negroes possessed religious assets which were of tremendous value to the community. The result was natural. The religious survey of that community included all the people of the city. In the several meetings for instructions and the final meeting where all results were announced, representatives of both races met in the white Presbyterian Church. After the last meeting a white woman said the best speech made on the results of the survey was made by a Negro woman. Both groups seemed very happy because of this working together for a single cause, the improvement of the community for every person in it. Real Christianity must have been very greatly advanced in that city.'

One of the great needs in the South in order to bring about a better understanding between the races is to inaugurate a continuous program of fair publicity. No method is more effective than the press. Newspapermen should be interviewed frequently and urged to present more facts about Negro achievement rather than to emphasize only such items as Negro's crimes, court proceedings, number of them in jail, and the number sent to the penitentiary. Every effort should be made to curb inflammatory propaganda often seen in Negro newspapers. This type of publicity is becoming a greater menace to peace and harmony than any other one factor. The best citizens of both races should frown on such sheets. They have no place in a dual racial situation.

To have placed the most important topic first would probably have been to begin with a paragraph on health. Every county in the South should extend public health services to Negroes and whites alike. Health should come even before any discussion about the Negro's relative intelligence quotient. Through the county public health unit every member of the race should be vaccinated for smallpox, inoculated for diphtheria and typhoid fever. Baby clinics should be held at all schools and instruction should be given at least once a month to mid-wives in prenatal care of mothers and the care of babies.

A supervising teacher should be placed in charge of the Negro schools of every county in the South. His selection is of vital importance in preserving peace and harmony between the races. A teacher who has ability to hear and respond sensibly to the silent call of the children of his race for higher things of life should be selected. He should possess ability to lead his untrained teachers and to arouse in his constituency general pride and loyalty to their school, their

home, and their country. By precept and example he should daily instill into his pupils fundamental ideas that will enable them to live peacefully with the white race.

To maintain right relationship between the races, school boards, county courts, city councils, and all other governing boards should discourage in every way possible the establishment of white business organizations in Negro territory where it would likely bring the whites and blacks into deep competition. All sensible whites and blacks should avoid even the appearance of trouble. Negroes should be encouraged to develop better business relations among themselves. This is necessary because of the fact that there are few preferred places open for Negro youth who finish their educational courses. It is the rarest case where a Negro who has taken a course in practical agriculture has a piece of land to which he may return after his college work or even high school work and till it as his own property or the property of his family. Negroes should realize these facts and become more interested in building businesses of their own in order to take care of their own needs successfully. Such a program would necessitate cooperative leadership.

Substantial progress in better racial feeling is being made in the South. The philosophy of education, 'That every individual shall have the privilege of education at public expense to that extent and to that kind which may be to the best good to society and may provoke the utmost happiness to the individual himself,' is being given the practical test in many places in the Southland at this time. By way of illustration, on October 8, 1929, the Webster Parish, Louisiana officials, cooperating with the State Library Commission and the Julius Rosenwald Board, inaugurated a five-year parish-wide library service. In the first place, to extend service to the separate races, totaling 29,490 people, living over an area of 609 square miles and at the same time to maintain proper relationships seemed impossible to many good citizens. Many people predicted failure, even racial trouble. In the second place, to furnish library service to the public schools, both white and black, and at the same time to meet both state and college requirements was considered by a great many people to be entirely out of the question. Many leading educators doubted the possibility of such a venture.

The Webster Parish School Board had for the past eight years employed for the colored schools a Jeanes supervisor who had aided very materially in bringing about the right relationship between the races. The school population of the parish is about equally divided between the whites and blacks. This had made the question of Negro education a real problem in the face of none too favorable public sentiment and the inability of colored citizens to give financial aid through taxation to the school program. During these years, the supervising Jeanes teacher had prepared the way for this cooperative effort by having obtained the good will of the leading white citizens. Almost three years of the five-year

experiment have expired. Mr. S. L. Smith of the Rosenwald Fund says, 'It is no longer an experiment but is a real successful demonstration.' The library for the current year, up to April 1, 1932, showed a total of 9,512 borrowers, 2,113 of whom were Negroes, with a total circulation of 418,980 volumes. In this library the books are in circulation and not on the shelves. Webster Parish Library is a unique experiment, and its conduct is cooperative and democratic. It has solved in part, to say the least, the problem of furnishing efficient library service to both races to both children and adults at small cost. It not only furnishes pleasure for the erudite people who read books for the sake of reading, but it also furnishes real service to the bread winner who must make his living by the sweat of the brow, exposes him to good books, thereby giving him an opportunity to realize more fully the great truth that man cannot live by bread alone. No people are more anxious to have education than Negroes of today. A great opportunity to develop the country is being missed because of prejudice against Negro education. The South is the Negro's home. Why not give him better schools and make of him a clean, healthy, law-abiding, respectable citizen? Would it not be a real injustice for us to teach any person to read and then keep books away from him? The highly favorable position that the South now enjoys will not likely always exist. Should we at once begin to capitalize in a large way our greatest asset, namely, black labor? Are we being lulled to inactivity by false sentiment and sleeping idly on a field of hidden treasure?

In conclusion, it seems that the time has come for leaders in religion, education, and business to place themselves definitely on the affirmative side of this question of education of all of our population about the vital issues upon which our progress depends. No state or section can develop normally educationally, religiously, or commercially when a large percentage of its population is dependent, sick, and illiterate. It is time for the South to become alert to this situation and to use every means possible to stamp out the two-fold curse of illiteracy and disease.

## VITA

Robert L. Frye was born in Shongaloo, Louisiana, on January 9, 1927. He received his elementary and secondary education from Shongaloo High School, located in Webster Parish, Louisiana. He graduated from Louisiana State University in 1949 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Health and Physical Education and Social Studies. He received his Master of Education degree in 1954 and is presently a candidate for the Doctor of Education degree at Louisiana State University.

His first teaching assignment, in 1949, was in the Reeves High School in Allen Parish, Louisiana, where he was a teacher and coach for three years. In 1952, he was appointed to his first principalship at Evergreen High School in Webster Parish where he served for two years. In 1954, he was promoted to the principalship of Dubberly High School where he remained until 1958 when he was named principal of Shongaloo High School. After serving in that capacity for six years, he was appointed Supervisor of Secondary Education in the Louisiana State Department of Education, the position he now holds.

He is married to the former Bettye Jean Elmore and he is the father of four children, Randy, Renee, Deborah, and Kevin.


## EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Robert L. Frye

Major Field: Education

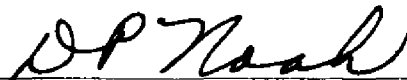
Title of Thesis: Edwin Sanders Richardson, Educator

Approved:

  
Major Professor and Chairman

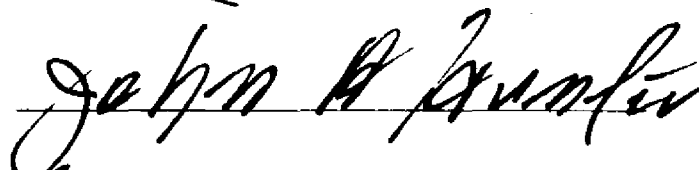
  
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:











Date of Examination:

December 10, 1965